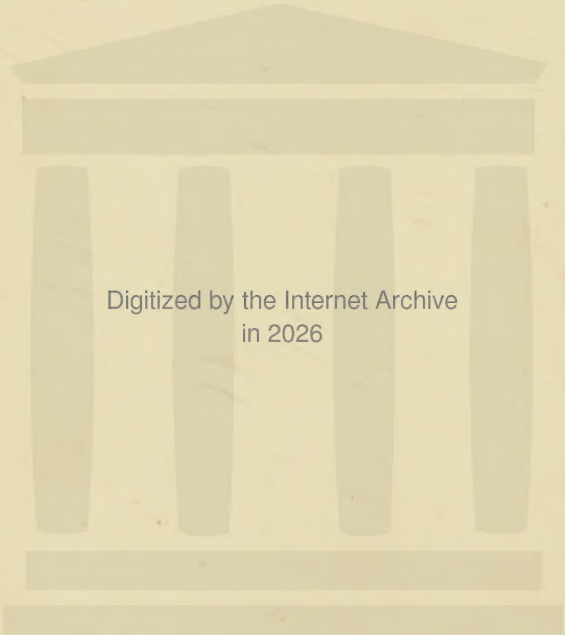
WAGNER'S LIFE AND WORKS

GUSTAV KOBBÉ

VOL. II

11/23
STRAND PRICE
$ 5.00



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THE DEATH PROPHECY.

WAGNER'S LIFE AND WORKS.

VOL. II. { NIBELUNG, * * * *
TRISTAN, * * * *
MASTERSINGERS, *
PARSIFAL. * * * * }

BY

GUSTAV KOBBÉ.

SECOND EDITION.

NEW YORK:
G. SCHIRMER.
1896.

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BURR PRINTING HOUSE, FRANKFORT AND JACOB STS., N. Y.

—TO—

CAROLYN WHEELER KOBBÉ.

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INTRODUCTION.

The "Ring of the Nibelung" consists of four music-dramas—"Rhinegold," the "Valkyr," "Siegfried" and the "Dusk of the Gods." The "books" of these were written in inverse order. Wagner made a dramatic sketch of the Nibelung myth as early as the autumn of 1848 and between then and the autumn of 1850 he wrote the "Death of Siegfried." This subsequently became the "Dusk of the Gods." Meanwhile Wagner's ideas as to the proper treatment of the myth seem to have undergone a change. "Siegfried's Death" ended simply dramatically, *Brünnhilde* leading *Siegfried* to Valhall. Afterwards Wagner evidently conceived the purpose of connecting the final catastrophe of his Trilogy with the Dusk of the Gods, or end of all things, in Northern mythology, and of embodying a profound truth in the action of the music-dramas. This metaphysical significance of the work is believed to be sufficiently explained in the brief synopsis of the plot of the Trilogy and in the descriptive musical and dramatic analysis below.

In the autumn of 1850 when Wagner was on the point of sketching out the music of "Siegfried's Death," he recognized that he must lead up to it with another drama, and "Young Siegfried," afterwards "Siegfried," was the result. This in turn he found incomplete, and finally decided to supplement it with the "Valkyr" and "Rhinegold." This backward *modus operandi* he explained to Liszt in a characteristic letter dated Albisbrunn, November 20, 1851.

"Rhinegold" was produced in Munich, at the *Hoftheater*

September 22, 1869; the "Valkyr," on the same stage, June 26, 1870. "Siegfried" and the "Dusk of the Gods" were not performed until 1876, when they were produced at Bayreuth.

Of the principal characters in the "Ring of the Nibelung," *Alberich*, the Nibelung, and *Wotan*, the chief of the gods, are symbolic of greed for wealth and power. This lust leads *Alberich* to renounce love—the most sacred of emotions—in order that he may rob the Rhine-daughters of the Rhinegold and forge from it the ring which is to make him all-powerful. *Wotan* by strategy obtains the ring, but, instead of returning it to the Rhine-daughters, he gives it to the giants, *Fafner* and *Fasolt* as ransom for *Freia*, the goddess of youth and beauty, whom he had promised to the giants as a reward for building Walhalla. *Alberich* has cursed the ring and all into whose possession it may come. The giants no sooner obtain it than they fall to quarreling over it and *Fafner* slays *Fasolt* and then retires to a cave in the heart of a forest where, in the form of a dragon, he guards the ring and the rest of the treasure which *Wotan* wrested from Alberich and also gave to the giants as ransom for Freia. This treasure includes the tarn-helmet, a helmet made of Rhinegold, the wearer of which can assume any guise.

Wotan having witnessed the slaying of *Fasolt*, is filled with dread lest the curse of *Alberich* be visited upon the gods. To defend Valhalla against the assaults of *Alberich* and the host of Nibelungs, he begets in union with *Erda*, the goddess of wisdom, the Valkyrs (chief among them *Brünnhilde*) who course through the air on superb chargers and bear the bodies of departed heroes to Valhalla, where they revive and aid the gods in warding off the attacks of the Nibelungs. But it is also necessary that the

curse-laden ring should be wrested from *Fafner* and restored through purely unselfish motives to the Rhine-daughters, and the curse thus lifted from the race of the gods. None of the gods can do this because the motives would not be entirely unselfish. Hence, *Wotan*, for a time, casts off his divinity, and in disguise as Wälse, begets in union with a human woman the Wälsung twins, *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde*. *Siegmund* he hopes will be the hero who will slay *Fafner* and restore the ring to the Rhine-daughters. To nerve him for this task, *Wotan* surrounds the Wälsungs with numerous hardships. *Sieglinde* is forced to become the wife of her robber *Hunding*. *Siegmund*, storm-driven, seeks shelter in *Hunding's* hut, where he and his sister, recognizing one another, form an incestuous union and escape. *Hunding* overtakes them and *Wotan*, as *Siegmund* has been guilty of a crime against the marriage vow, is obliged, at the request of his spouse *Fricka*, the Juno of Northern mythology, to give victory to *Hunding*. *Brünnhilde*, contrary to *Wotan's* command, takes pity on *Siegmund* and seeks to shield him against *Hunding*. For this *Wotan* causes her to fall into a profound slumber. The hero who will penetrate the barrier of fire with which *Wotan* has surrounded the rock upon which she slumbers can claim her as his bride.

After *Siegmund's* death *Sieglinde* gives birth to *Siegfried*, a son of their incestuous union, who is reared by one of the Nibelungs, *Mime*, in the forest where *Fafner* guards the Nibelung treasure. *Mime* is seeking to weld the pieces of *Siegmund's* sword (Nothung or Needful) in order that *Siegfried* may slay *Fafner*, *Mime* hoping to then possess himself of the treasure. But he cannot weld the sword. At last *Siegfried*, learning that it was his father's weapon, welds the pieces and slays *Fafner*. His lips having come in con-

tact with his bloody fingers, he is, through the magic power of the dragon's blood, enabled to understand the language of the birds, and a little feathery songster warns him of *Mime's* treachery. *Siegfried* slays the Nibelung and is then guided to the fiery barrier around the Valkyr rock. Penetrating this, he comes upon *Brünnhilde*, and, enraptured with her beauty, he awakens her and claims her as his bride, and she, the virgin pride of the goddess, yielding to the love of the woman, gives herself up to him. He plights his troth with the curse-laden ring which he has wrested from *Fafner*.

Siegfried goes forth in quest of adventure. On the Rhine lives the Gibichung *Gunther*, his sister *Gutrune* and their half-brother *Hagen*, the son of the Nibelung *Alberich*. *Hagen*, knowing of *Siegfried's* coming, plans his destruction in order to regain the ring for the Nibelungs. Therefore, craftily concealing *Brünnhilde's* and *Siegfried's* relations from *Gunther* he incites a longing in the latter to possess *Brünnhilde* as his bride. Carrying out a plot evolved by *Hagen*, *Gutrune* on *Siegfried's* arrival presents to him a drinking horn filled with a love-potion. *Siegfried* drinks, forgets *Brünnhilde*, and becoming enamored of *Gutrune* asks her in marriage of *Gunther*. The latter consents provided *Siegfried* will disguise himself in the Tarn-helmet as *Gunther* and lead *Brünnhilde* to him as bride. *Siegfried* readily agrees, and in the guise of *Gunther* overcomes *Brünnhilde* and delivers her to the Gibichung. But *Brünnhilde*, recognizing on *Siegfried* the ring which her conqueror had drawn from her finger, accuses him of treachery in delivering her, his own bride, to *Gunther*. The latter, unmasked and also suspicious of *Siegfried*, conspires with *Hagen* and *Brünnhilde*, who, knowing naught of the love-potion, is roused to a frenzy of hate and jealousy by *Siegfried's*

treachery, to compass the young hero's death. *Hagen* slays *Siegfried* during a hunt, and then in a quarrel with *Gunther* over the ring also kills the Gibichung. Meanwhile *Brünnhilde* has learned through the Rhine-daughters of the treachery of which she and *Siegfried* have been the victims. All her jealous hatred of *Siegfried* yields to her old love for him and a passionate yearning to join him in death. She draws the ring from his finger, ignites the pyre with a torch and then, mounting her steed, plunges into the flames. One of the Rhine-daughters seizes the curse-laden ring. *Hagen* rushes into the flooding Rhine hoping to regain it, but the other Rhine-daughters grasp him and draw him down into the depths. Not only the flames of the pyre, but a glow which pervades the whole horizon illumines the scene. It is Walhalla being consumed by fire. Through love—the very emotion *Alberich* renounced in order to gain wealth and power—*Brünnhilde* has caused the old order of things to pass away and a new and better era to dawn.

The sum of all that has been written concerning the book of "The Ring of the Nibelung" is probably larger than the sum of all that has been written concerning the librettos used by all other composers in their aggregate. What can be said of the ordinary opera libretto beyond Voltaire's remark that "what is too stupid to be spoken is sung?" But "The Ring of the Nibelung" produced vehement discussion. It was attacked and defended, praised and ridiculed, extolled and condemned, And it survived all the discussion it called forth. It was the grandest fact in Wagner's career that he always triumphed. He threw his lance into the midst of his enemies and fought his way up to it. No matter how much opposition his music-dramas

excited, they found their way into the repertoire of the leading opera houses of Germany and have since their production proved the most popular musico-dramatic works of the time.

It was contended on many sides that a book like "The Ring of the Nibelung" could not be set to music. Certainly it could not be after the fashion of an ordinary opera. Perhaps people were so accustomed to the books of nonsense which figured as opera librettos that they thought "The Ring of the Nibelung" was so great a work that its action and climaxes were beyond the scope of musical expression. For such, Wagner has placed music on a higher level. He has shown that music makes a great drama greater.

One of the most remarkable features of Wagner's works is the author's absorption of the traits of the times of which he wrote. He seems to have gone back to the very time in which the scene of the music-drama is laid and to have himself lived through the events in his plot. Hans Sachs could not have left a more faithful portrayal of life in the Nuremberg of his day than Wagner has given us in "Die Meistersinger." In "The Ring of the Nibelung" he has done more — he has absorbed an imaginary epoch; lived over the days of gods and demigods; infused life into mythological figures. "The Rhinegold," which is full of varied interest from its first note to its last, deals entirely with beings of mythology. They are presented true to life — if that expression may be used in connection with beings that never lived — that is to say, they are so vividly drawn that we forget such beings never lived, and take as much interest in their doings and sayings as if they were lifelike reproductions of historical characters. Was there ever a love scene more thrilling than that between *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde?* It represents the gradations of the love of two

souls from its first awakening to its rapturous greeting in full self-consciousness. No one stops to think during that impassioned scene that the close relationship between *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde* would in these days have been a bar to their legal union. For all we know, in those moments when the impassioned music of that scene whirls us away in its resistless current, not a drop of related blood courses through their veins. This is a sufficient answer to the sermons that have been preached against the immorality of this scene. Moreover, as it is by no means dramatically necessary that *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde* should be brother and sister, those who hold mythological beings to as strict a moral accountability as they do the people of to-day can imagine that the lovers were strangers or second cousins or anything else—only let them stop preaching sermons. It has been said that we could not be interested in mythological beings—that "The Ring of the Nibelung" lacked human interest. In reply, I say that wonderful as is the first act of "The Valkyr," there is nothing in it to compare in wild and lofty beauty with the last act of that music-drama—especially the scene between *Brünnhilde* and *Wotan*.

That there are faults of dramatic construction in "The Ring of the Nibelungen" I admit. I have not hesitated to point them out. But there are faults of construction in Shakespeare. What would be the critical verdict if "Hamlet" were now to have its first performance in the exact form in which Shakespeare left it? With all its faults of dramatic construction "The Ring of the Nibelung" is a remarkable drama, full of life and action and logically developed, the events leading up to superb climaxes. Wagner was doubly inspired. He was both a great dramatist and a great musician.

The chief faults of dramatic construction of which Wagner was guilty in "The Ring of the Nibelung" are certain unduly prolonged scenes which are merely episodical—that is unnecessary to the development of the plot so that they delay the action and weary the audience to a point which endangers the success of the really sublime portions of the score. Such are the scenes between *Wotan* and *Fricka* and *Wotan* and *Brünnhilde* in the second act of the "Valkyr"; between *Wotan* and *Mime* in the first act of "Siegfried"; between *Wotan* and *Erda* in the third act of "Siegfried"; and the *Norn* scene in the "Dusk of the Gods." In several of these scenes there is a great amount of narrative, the story of events with which we have become familiar being retold in detail although some incidents which connect the plot of the particular music-drama with that of the preceding one are also related. But, as narrative on the stage makes little impression, and, when it is sung perhaps none at all, because it cannot be well understood, it would seem as if prefaces to the libretti could have taken the place of these narratives. Certain it is that these long drawn-out scenes did more to retard the popular recognition of Wagner's genius than the activity of hostile critics and musicians. Still, it should be remembered that nowhere, except at Bayreuth, are these music-dramas given as they should be, and that they were composed for performance under the ideal circumstances which prevail there. At Bayreuth the performances begin in the afternoon and there are long waits between the acts, during which you can refresh yourself by a stroll or by the more mundane pleasures of the table. Then, after an hour's relaxation of the mind and of the sense of hearing, you are ready to hear another act. Under these agreeable conditions the faults of dramatic construction are not fatigueing because one

remains sufficiently fresh to enjoy the music of the dramatically faulty scenes. Even poor old *Wotan's* frequent outbursts of grief are not nearly so tedious as they are when the "Ring" is performed elsewhere than at Bayreuth.

Wotan, except in the noble scene with *Brünnhilde* in the finale of "The Valkyr," is a bore. He is Wagner's one failure—and Wagner's failure was on as colossal a scale as his successes were. *Wotan* is the chief of the gods, a race marked out by fate for annihilation. Walking in the shadow of impending destruction he would, one might suppose, bear himself with a certain tragic dignity. Instead of this, however, he is constantly bemoaning his fate and hence strikes one as contemptible rather than as tragic. Moreover, even if his outbursts of grief were tragic instead of ridiculous and wearisome, we could hardly clothe with god-like dignity a character who pursues the female sex—divine, semi-divine and purely human—with the persistency of a mythological Mormon and has reared a numerous family each member of which would probably find considerable difficulty in identifying his or her mother.

But if *Wotan* is a failure, *Brünnhilde* is on the other hand Wagner's noblest creation. She takes upon herself the sins of the gods and the Nibelungs and by her expiation frees the world from the curse of lust for wealth and power. She is a perfect dramatic incarnation of the profound and beautiful metaphysical argument upon which the plot of the "Ring of the Nibelung" is based.

A RHINE-DAUGHTER.

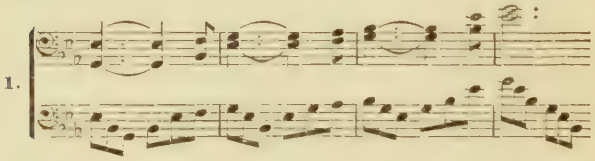
"THE RING OF THE NIBELUNG."

"THE RHINEGOLD."

IN "The Rhinegold" we meet with supernatural beings of German mythology—the Rhine-daughters *Woglinde*, *Wellgunde* and *Flosshilde*, whose duty it is to guard the precious Rhinegold; *Wotan*, the chief of the Gods; his spouse *Fricka*; *Loge*, the God of Fire (the diplomat of Walhalla); *Freia*, the Goddess of Youth and Beauty; her brothers *Donner* and *Froh*; *Erda*, the all-wise woman; the giants *Fafner* and *Fasolt*; *Alberich* and *Mime* of the race of Nibelungs, cunning, treacherous gnomes who dwell in Nibelheim in the bowels of the earth.

The first scene of "Rhinegold" is laid in the Rhine, where the Rhinedaughters guard the Rhinegold.

The work opens with a wonderfully descriptive prelude, which depicts with marvelous art (marvelous because so simple) the transition from the quietude of the water-depths to the wavy life of the Rhinedaughters. The double basses intone E flat. Only this note is heard during four bars. Then three contra bassoons add a B flat. The chord, thus formed, sounds until the 136th bar. With the sixteenth bar there flows over this seemingly immovable triad, as the current of a river flows over its immovable bed, the MOTIVE OF THE RHINE:



A horn intones this Motive. Then one horn after another takes it up until its wave-like tones are heard on the eight horns. On the flowing accompaniment of the 'cellos the Motive is carried to the woodwind. It rises higher and higher, the other strings successively joining in the accompaniment, which now flows on in gentle undulations until the Motive is heard on the high notes of the woodwind, while the violins have joined in the accompaniment. When the theme thus seems to have stirred the waters from their depth to their surface the curtain rises.

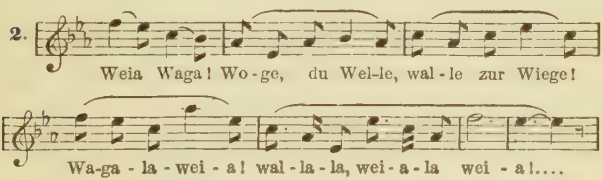
The scene shows the bed and flowing waters of the Rhine, the light of day reaching the depths only as

a greenish twilight. The current flows on over rugged rocks and through dark chasms.

Woglinde is circling gracefully around the central ridge of rock. To an accompaniment as wavy as the waters through which she swims, she sings the much-discussed

Weia! Waga! Woge, du Welle,
Walle zur Wiege! Wagala weia!
Wallala, Weiala weia!

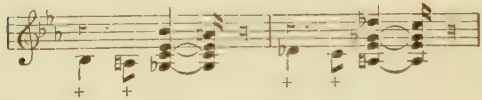
Some of these words belong to what may be termed the language of the Rhinedaughters. Looked at in print they seem odd, perhaps even ridiculous. When, however, they are sung to the melody of the Rhinedaughters they have a wavy grace which is simply entrancing. The Motive to which they are sung (Kleinmichel piano score with words, page 5, line 4; see also page 25, line 1), I call the Motive of the Rhinedaughters.



In wavy sport the Rhinedaughters dart from cliff to cliff. Meanwhile *Alberich* has clambered from the depths up to one of the cliffs, and watches, while standing in its shadow, the gambols of the Rhinedaughters. As he speaks to them there is a momentary harshness in the music, whose flowing rhythm is broken (page 8, line 3). Characteristically descriptive of his discomfiture is the music when, in futile endeavors to clamber up to them,

he inveighs against the "slippery slime" which causes him to lose his foothold (page 12, line 2).

When, after *Woglinde*, *Wellgunde* and *Flosshilde* have in turn gamboled almost within his reach, only to dart away again, he curses his own weakness, you hear the MOTIVE OF THE NIBELUNGS' SERVITUDE, (page 24, line 1, bars 3 and 4).

3. 

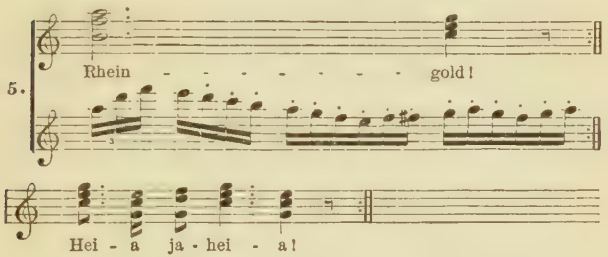
Swimming high above him the Rhinedaughters incite him with gleeful cries to chase them. *Alberich* tries to ascend, but always slips and falls back. Finally, beside himself with rage, he threatens them with clenched fist. The music accompanying this threat is in the typical rhythm of the Nibelung Motive (see No. 18).

Alberich's gaze is attracted and held by a glow which suddenly pervades the waves above him and increases until from the highest point of the central cliff a bright, golden ray shoots through the water. Amid the shimmering accompaniment of the violins is heard on the horn the RHINEGOLD MOTIVE (page 31, line 1).

4.

With shouts of triumph the Rhinedaughters swim around the rock. Their cry, "Rhinegold," is a characteristic motive, heard again later in the cycle, and the new accompanying figure on the violins may also be noted, as later on further reference to it will be neces-

sary. THE RHINEDAUGHTERS' SHOUT OF TRIUMPH and the accompaniment to it are as follows:

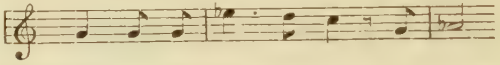


As the river glitters with golden light the Rhinegold Motive rings out brilliantly on the trumpet. The Nibelung is fascinated by the sheen. The Rhinedaughters gossip with one another, and *Alberich* thus learns that the light is that of the Rhinegold, and that whoever shapeth a ring from this gold will become invested with great power. Then is heard THE RING MOTIVE page 41, line 3) in the woodwind:

When *Flosshilde* bids her sisters cease their prattle, lest some sinister foe should overhear them, the music which accompanied *Alberich's* threat in the typical Nibelung rhythm reappears for an instant (page 42, line 3).

Wellgunde and *Woglinde* ridicule their sister's anxiety, saying that no one would care to filch the gold, because it would give power only to him who abjures or renounces love. The darkly prophetic MOTIVE OF THE

RENUNCIATION OF LOVE is heard here (page 43, line 1). It is sung by *Woglinde*:

7. 

As *Alberich* reflects on the words of the Rhinedaughters (page 47, line 3) the Ring Motive occurs both in voice and orchestra in mysterious pianissimo (like an echo of *Alberich's* sinister thoughts), and is followed by the Motive of Renunciation. Then is heard the sharp, decisive rhythm of the Nibelung Motive (see No. 18), and *Alberich* fiercely springs over to the central rock. The Rhinedaughters scream and dart away in different directions. The threatening measures of the Nibelung—this time loud and relentless—and *Alberich* has reached the summit of the highest cliff.

"Hark, ye floods! Love I renounce forever!" he cries, and amid the crash of the Rhinegold Motive he seizes the gold and disappears in the depths. With screams of terror the Rhinedaughters dive after the robber through the darkened water, guided by *Alberich's* shrill, mocking laugh. Waters and rocks sink; as they disappear, the billowy accompaniment sinks lower and lower in the orchestra. Above it rises once more the Motive of Renunciation (page 53, line 5). The Ring Motive is heard, and then as the waves change into nebulous clouds the billowy accompaniment rises pianissimo until, with a repetition of the Ring Motive, the action passes to the second scene. One crime has already been committed —the theft of the Rhinegold by *Alberich*. How that crime and the ring which he shapes from the gold inspire other crimes is told in the course of the following scenes of "Rhinegold." Hence the significance of the

Ring Motive as a connecting link between the first and second scenes.

SCENE II.

The dawn illumines a castle with glittering turrets on a rocky height at the back. Through a deep valley between this and the foreground the Rhine flows.

With the opening of the second scene the stately WALHALLA MOTIVE is heard:

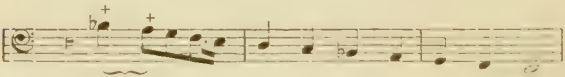
8.

This is a motive of superb beauty. It greets us again and again in "Rhinegold" and frequently in the later music-dramas of the cycle. Yet, often as it occurs, one hears it with ever-growing admiration. Walhalla is the dwelling of gods and heroes and its motive is divinely and heroically beautiful. Though it is essentially broad and stately it often assumes a tender mood, like the chivalric gentleness which every true hero feels toward woman. Thus it is at the opening of the second scene, for here this motive, which when played forte or fortissimo is one of the stateliest of musical inspirations, is marked *piano* and *molto dolce*. In crescendo and decrescendo it rises and falls, as rises and falls with each breath the bosom of the beautiful *Fricka*, who slumbers at *Wotan's* side.

As *Fricka* awakens her eyes fall on the castle. In her surprise she calls to her spouse. *Wotan* dreams on, the Ring Motive, and later the Walhalla Motive, being heard in the orchestra, for with the ring *Wotan* is finally to compensate the Giants for building Walhalla. As he opens his eyes and sees the castle you hear (page 56,

line 4) the "Spear Motive," which is a characteristic variation of the "Motive of Compact" (No. 9). For *Wotan* should enforce, if needful, the compacts of the Gods with his spear.

Wotan sings of the glory of Walhalla. All through his apostrophe resounds the Walhalla Motive. *Fricka* reminds him that he has made a compact with the Giants to deliver over to them for their work in building Walhalla, *Freia*, the Goddess of Youth and Beauty. This introduces on the 'cellos and double basses the MOTIVE OF COMPACT.

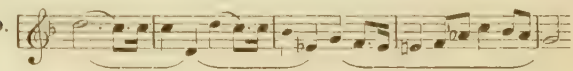
9. 

A theme more expressive of the binding force of law it is impossible to conceive. It has the inherent dignity and power of the idea of justice.

Then follows a little domestic spat between *Wotan* and *Fricka*, *Wotan* claiming that *Fricka* was as anxious as he to have Walhalla built, and *Fricka* answering that she desired to have it erected in order to persuade *Wotan* to lead a more domestic life. At *Fricka's* words,

"Halls, bright and gleaming,"

the FRICKA MOTIVE is heard for the first time (page 61, line 1). It is a caressing motive of much grace and beauty:

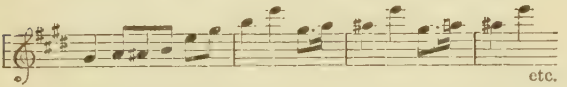
10. 

It is also prominent in *Wotan's* reply immediately following. When *Wotan* tells *Fricka* that he never in-

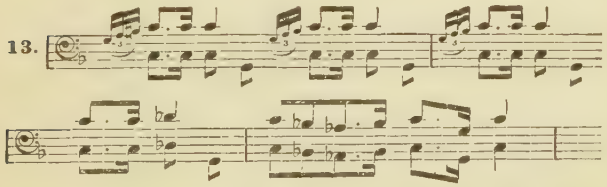
tended to really give up *Freia* to the Giants, chromatics, like little tongues of fire, appear in the accompaniment (page 63, line 3). They are suggestive of the *Loge*, Motive, for with the aid of Loge, *Wotan* hopes to trick the Giants. "Then save her at once!" calls *Fricka*, as *Freia* enters in hasty flight. At this point (page 64, line 1) is heard the first bar of the Freia Motive combined with the Flight Motive. The MOTIVE OF FLIGHT is as follows:

11.

The following is the FREIA MOTIVE:

12. 

I give it here already in full for convenient reference. With *Freia's* exclamations that the Giants are pursuing her the first suggestion of the Giant Motive appears (page 64, line 3), and as these "great, hulking fellows" enter the heavy, clumsy GIANT MOTIVE is heard in its entirety (page 63, line 1):

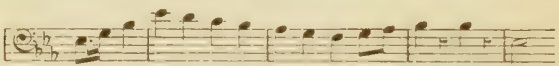
13. 

Fasolt and *Fafner* have come to demand that *Wotan* deliver up to them *Freia*, according to his promise when

they agreed to build Walhalla for him. In the ensuing scene, in which *Wotan* parleys with the giants, the Giant Motive, the Walhalla Motive, the Motive of the Compact and the first bar of the Freia Motive figure until *Fasolt's* threatening words (page 72, line 1):

"Peace wane when you break your compact,"

when there is heard a version of the Motive of Compact characteristic enough to be distinguished as the MOTIVE OF COMPACT WITH THE GIANTS:

14. 

The Walhalla, Giant and Freia motives again are heard until *Fafner* speaks of the golden apples which grow in *Freia's* garden (page 74, line 1). These golden apples are the fruit of which the gods partake in order to enjoy eternal youth. The Motive of Eternal Youth, which now appears, is one of the loveliest in the Cycle. It seems as though age could not wither it, nor custom stale its infinite variety. Its first bar is reminiscent of the Ring Motive (No. 6), for there is subtle relationship between the Golden Apples of *Freia* and the Rhinegold. This is the MOTIVE OF ETERNAL YOUTH:

15.

It is finely combined with the Giant Motive at *Fafner's* words:

"Let her forthwith be torn from them all."

Froh and *Donner*, *Freia's* brothers, enter hastily to save their sister. As *Froh* clasps her in his arms, while

Donner confronts the Giants, the Motive of Eternal Youth rings out triumphantly on the horns and wood-wind (page 75, line 4).

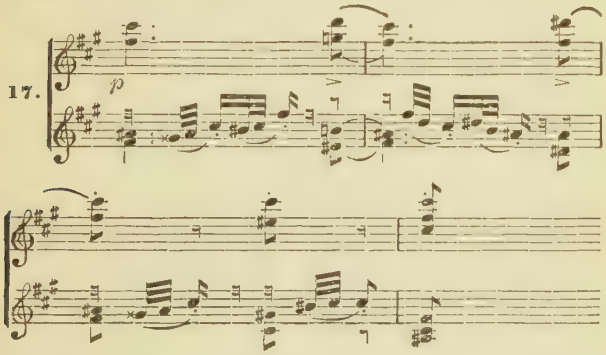
But *Freia's* hope is short-lived. The Motive of the Compact with the Giants, with its weighty import, resounds as *Wotan* stretches his spear between the hostile groups. For though *Wotan* desires to keep *Freia* in Walhalla, he dare not offend the Giants. But at this critical moment he sees his cunning adviser, *Loge*, approaching. These are *Loge's* characteristic motives:

LOGE MOTIVE:

16.

MAGIC FIRE MOTIVE:

17.



They are heard throughout the ensuing scene, in which *Wotan* upbraids *Loge* for not having discovered something which the Giants would be willing to accept as a

substitute for *Freia*. *Loge* says he has traveled the world over without finding aught that would compensate man for the renunciation of a lovely woman. At this point is heard the Motive of Renunciation. Then follows *Loge's* narrative of his wanderings. With great cunning he intends to tell *Wotan* of the theft of the Rhinegold and of the wondrous worth of a ring shaped from the gold in order to incite the listening Giants to ask for it as a compensation for giving up *Freia*. Hence Wagner, as *Loge* begins his narrative, has blended, with a marvelous sense of musical beauty and dramatic fitness, two phrases: the Freia Motive and the accompaniment to the Rhine daughters' shout of triumph in the first scene. Whoever will turn to page 85, line 4, last two bars of the vocal-piano score, will find the Freia Motive in the treble and the somewhat simplified accompaniment to the cry "Rhinegold" in the bass. This music continues until *Loge* says that he discovered but one (namely, *Alberich*) who was willing to renounce love. Then the Rhinegold Motive is sounded tristly in a minor key and immediately afterward is heard the Motive of Renunciation.

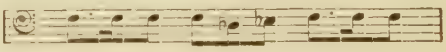
Loge next tells how *Alberich* stole the gold. All through this portion of the narrative are heard, in the accompaniment, reminiscences of the motives of the first scene. It should be noticed that when (page 89, line 1) *Loge* gives *Wotan* the message of the Rhinedaughters, that the chief of the gods wrest the gold from *Alberich* and restore it to them, the Rhinegold Motive rings out brilliantly in a major key (C major). *Loge* has already excited the curiosity of the Giants, and when *Fafner* asks him what power *Alberich* will gain through the possession of the gold, he dwells upon the magical attributes of the ring shaped from Rhinegold. As *Wotan*

ponders over *Loge's* words the Ring Motive is heard, for *Wotan* is planning how he may possess himself of the ring. With true knowledge of human, and especially of feminine nature, Wagner makes *Fricka* ask if articles of jewelry could be made of the gold. As *Loge* tells her that the possession of the ring will insure *Wotan's* fidelity to her and that *Alberich's* Nibelungs are at that moment forging a ring of the Rhinegold, he sings the Fricka Motive (*Fricka* being the guardian of marriage-fidelity), while, when he refers to the Nibelungs (page 92, line 3, last two bars) there is heard for the first time the Nibelung Motive. (The Nibelung Motive will be found (No. 18) at the point when it assumes its due prominence in the score, viz., in the Nibelheim scene.) *Wotan* is evidently strongly bent on wresting the gold from *Alberich* and retaining it in his own possession instead of restoring it to the Rhinedaughters, for, as he stands wrapt in meditation (page 93, line 1), the Rhinegold Motive is heard in a minor key, and as he asks *Loge* how he may shape the gold into a ring we have the Ring Motive. *Loge* tells *Wotan* that *Alberich* has abjured love and already forged the ring. Here the Motive of Renunciation is sounded with a harsh power (page 94, line 3), expressive of *Alberich's* tyranny, which we are soon to witness.

Loge's diplomacy is beginning to bear results. *Fafner* tells *Fasolt* that he deems the possession of the gold more important than *Freia*. Notice here (page 97, line 2, last bar *et seq.*) how the Freia motive, so prominent when the Giants insisted on her as their compensation, is relegated to the bass and how (line 4, last two bars) the Rhinegold Motive breaks in upon the Motive of Eternal Youth as *Fafner* and *Fasolt* again advance toward

Wotan, for they now request *Wotan* to wrest the gold from *Alberich* and give it to them as ransom for *Freia*. *Wotan* refuses and the Giants, having proclaimed that they will give *Wotan* until evening to determine upon his course, seize *Freia* and drag her away. Here the music is highly descriptive. Pallor settles upon the faces of the gods; they seem to have grown older. Alas, they are already affected by the absence of *Freia*, the Goddess of Youth, whose motives are but palely reflected by the orchestra, as *Loge*, with cunning alarm, explains the cause of the gods' distress; until *Wotan* proclaims that he will go with *Loge* to Nibelheim.

Loge disappears down a crevice in the side of the rock. From it a sulphurous vapor at once issues. When *Wotan* has followed *Loge* into the cleft the vapor fills the stage and conceals the remaining characters. The vapors thicken to a black cloud, continually rising upward, until rocky chasms are seen. These have an upward motion, so that the stage appears to be sinking deeper and deeper. During this transformation scene there is an orchestral interlude. First is heard the Loge Motive, four times interrupted by the Motive of Renunciation. Beginning at page 111, line 5, bar 4, the Motive of Servitude is heard during four bars. Then, with a *molto vivace* the orchestra dashes into the Motive of Flight. Twice the Ring and Rhinegold motives are heard, the latter appearing the second time with the typical NIBELUNG MOTIVE (page 112, line 5), expressive of the enslaved Nibelungs constantly working at the forge.

18. 

This motive accompanies for sixteen bars, during

eight of which the rhythm is emphasized by the anvils on the stage, a broad expansion of the Flight Motive. Meanwhile from various distant quarters ruddy gleams of light illumine the chasms, and when the Flight Motive has died away, only the increasing clangor of smithies is heard from all directions. Gradually the sound of the anvils grows fainter; and, as the Ring Motive resounds like a shout of malicious triumph (expressive of *Alberich's* malignant joy at his possession of power), there is seen a subterranean cavern, apparently of illimitable depth, from which narrow shafts lead in all directions.

Scene III.

At the beginning of the third scene we hear again the measures heard when *Alberich* chased the Rhinedaughters. *Alberich* enters from a side cleft dragging after him the shrieking *Mime*. The latter lets fall a helmet which *Alberich* at once seizes. It is the tarnhelmet, made of Rhinegold, the wearing of which enables the wearer to become invisible or assume any shape. As *Alberich* closely examines the Tarnhelmet its motive is heard (page 117, line 2, beginning at the sixth bar). This is the Motive of the Tarnhelmet:

19.

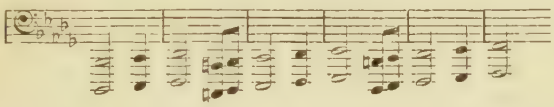
To test its power *Alberich* puts it on and changes into a column of vapor. He asks *Mime* if he is visible, and when *Mime* answers in the negative *Alberich* cries out shrilly, "Then feel me instead," at the same time mak-

ing poor *Mime* writhe under the blows of a visible scourge.

Alberich then departs—still in the form of a vaporous column—to announce to the Nibelungs that they are henceforth his slavish subjects. *Mime* cowers down with fear and pain. *Wotan* and *Loge* enter from one of the upper shafts. *Mime* tells them how *Alberich* has become all-powerful through the ring and the tarnhelmet made of the Rhinegold. The Motives occurring in *Mime's* narrative are the Nibelung, Servitude and Ring Motives, the latter in the terse, malignantly powerful form in which it occurred just before the opening of the third scene. Then *Alberich*, who has taken off the Tarnhelmet and hung it from his girdle, is seen in the distance, driving a crowd of Nibelungs before him from the caves below. They are laden with gold and silver, which he forces them to pile up in one place and so form a hoard. He suddenly perceives *Wotan* and *Loge*. After abusing *Mime* for permitting strangers to enter Nibelheim, he commands the Nibelungs to descend again into the caverns in search of new treasure for him. They hesitate. You hear the Ring Motive. *Alberich* draws the ring from his finger, stretches it threateningly toward the Nibelungs and commands them to obey the ring's master.

The Nibelungs disperse in headlong flight and with *Mime* rush back into the cavernous recesses. *Alberich* looks with mistrust upon *Wotan* and *Loge*. He asks them what they seek in Nibelheim. *Wotan* tells him they have heard reports of his extraordinary power and have come to ascertain if they are true. After some parleying the Nibelung points to the hoard, saying: "It is the merest heap compared to the mountain of treasure

to which it shall rise." Here appears part of the RISING HOARD MOTIVE (page 137, line 4), which in its complete form is as follows:

20. 

Alberich boasts that the whole world will come under his sway (you hear the Ring Motive), that the gods who now laugh and love in the enjoyment of youth and beauty will become subject to him (you hear the Freia Motive); for he has abjured love (you hear the Motive of Renunciation). Hence, even the gods in Walhalla shall dread him (you hear a variation of the Walhalla Motive), and he bids them beware of the time when the night-begotten host of the Nibelungs shall rise from Nibelheim into the realm of daylight (you hear the Rhinegold Motive followed by the Walhalla Motive, for it is through the power gained by the Rhinegold that Alberich hopes to possess himself of Walhalla). *Loge* cunningly flatters *Alberich*, and when the latter tells him of the Tarnhelmet feigns disbelief of *Alberich's* statements. *Alberich*, to prove their truth, puts on the helmet and transforms himself into a huge serpent. The Serpent Motive expresses the windings and writhings of the monster.

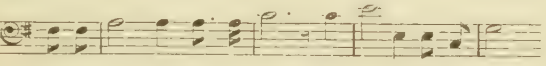
The serpent vanishes and *Alberich* reappears. When *Loge* doubts if *Alberich* can transform himself into something very small, the Nibelung changes into a toad. Now is *Loge's* chance. He calls to *Wotan* to set his foot on the toad. As *Wotan* does so, *Loge* puts his hand to its head and seizes the Tarnhelm. *Alberich* is seen writh-

ing under *Wotan's* foot. *Loge* binds *Alberich*; both seize him, drag him to the shaft from which they descended and disappear ascending. The scene now changes in the reverse direction to that in which it changed when *Wotan* and *Loge* were descending to Nibelheim. The orchestra accompanies the change of scene. The Ring Motive dies away from crashing fortissimo to piano, to be succeeded by the dark Motive of Renunciation. Then is heard the clangor of the Nibelung smithies, and amid it the Motive of Flight in its broadly-expanded form. The Giant, Walhalla, Loge and Servitude Motives follow, the last with crushing force as *Wotan* and *Loge* emerge from the cleft, dragging the pinioned *Alberich* with them. His lease of power was brief. He is again in a condition of servitude.

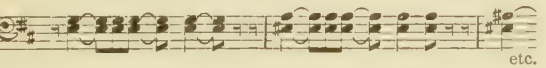
Scene IV.

A pale mist still veils the prospect as at the end of the second scene. *Loge* and *Wotan* place *Alberich* on the ground and *Loge* dances around the pinioned Nibelung, mockingly snapping his fingers at the prisoner. *Wotan* joins *Loge* in his mockery of *Alberich*. The Nibelung asks what he must give for his freedom. "Your hoard and your glittering gold," is *Wotan's* answer. *Alberich* assents to the ransom and *Loge* frees the gnome's right hand, *Alberich* raises the ring to his lips and murmurs a secret behest. The Nibelung Motive is heard, combined at first with the Motive of the Rising Hoard, then with the Motive of Servitude and later with both. This combination of the three Motives will be found on page 165, line 2, last bar; the Motive of Servitude being played in the right hand, the other two in the left. These three Motives continue prom-

inent as long as the Nibelungs emerge from the cleft and heap up the hoard. Then, as *Alberich* stretches out the Ring toward them, they rush in terror toward the cleft, into which they disappear. *Alberich* now asks for his freedom, but *Loge* throws the Tarnhelmet on to the heap. *Wotan* further demands that *Alberich* also give up the ring. At these words dismay and terror are depicted on *Alberich's* face. He had hoped to save the ring, but in vain. *Wotan* tears it from the gnome's finger. Then *Alberich*, impelled by hate and rage, curses the ring. The MOTIVE OF THE CURSE is as follows:

21. 

To it should be added the syncopated measures expressive of the threatening and ever-active NIBELUNGS' HATE:

22. 

Amid the heavy thuds of the Motive of Servitude *Alberich* vanishes in the cleft.

The mist begins to rise. It grows lighter. The Giant Motive and the Motive of Eternal Youth are heard, for the giants are approaching with *Freia*. *Donner*, *Froh* and *Fricka* hasten to greet *Wotan*. *Fasolt* and *Fafner* enter with *Freia*. It has grown clear, except that the mist still hides the distant castle. *Freia's* presence seems to have restored youth to the gods. While the Motive of the Giant Compact resounds, *Fasolt* asks for the ransom for *Freia*. *Wotan* points to the hoard. With staves the giants measure off a space of the

height and breadth of *Freia*. That space must be filled out with treasure.

Loge and *Froh* pile up the hoard, but the giants are not satisfied even when the Tarnhelmet has been added. They wish also the ring to fill out a crevice. *Wotan* turns in anger away from them. A bluish light glimmers in the rocky cleft to the right, and through it *Erda* rises to half her height. She warns *Wotan* against retaining possession of the ring. The Motives prominent during the action preceding the appearance of *Erda* will be readily recognized. They are the Giant Compact Motive combined with the Nibelung motive (the latter combined with the Giant Motive and Motive of the Hoard) and the Ring Motive, which breaks in upon the action with tragic force as *Wotan* refuses to give up the ring to the giants. The ERDA MOTIVE bears a strong resemblance to the Rhine Motive:

23.

The syncopated notes of the Nibelungs' malevolence, so threateningly indicative of the harm which *Alberich* is plotting, are also heard in *Erda's* warning (page 193, line 4). *Wotan*, heeding her words, throws the ring upon the hoard. The giants release *Freia*, who rushes joyfully toward the gods. Here the Freia Motive, combined with the Flight Motive, now no longer agitated but joyful, rings out gleefully. Soon these motives are interrupted by the Giant and Nibelung motives, there being added to these later the Motive of the Nibelungs' Hate and the Ring Motive. *Alberich's* curse is already beginning its dread work. The giants dispute over the spoils, their dispute waxes to strife, and at last *Fafner*

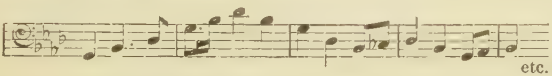
slays *Fasolt* and snatches the ring from the dying giant. As the gods gaze horror-stricken upon the scene, the Curse Motive resounds with crushing force (page 200, line 3). *Loge* congratulates *Wotan* that he should have given up the curse-laden ring. His words are accompanied by the Motive of the Nibelungs' Hate. Yet even *Fricka's* caresses, as she asks *Wotan* to lead her into Walhalla, cannot divert the god's mind from dark thoughts, and the Curse Motive accompanies his gloomy, curse-haunted reflections.

Donner ascends to the top of a lofty rock. He gathers the mists about him until he is enveloped by a black cloud. He swings his hammer. There is a flash of lightning, a crash of thunder, and lo! the cloud vanishes. A rainbow bridge spans the valley to Walhalla, which is illumined by the setting sun. The DONNER MOTIVE is as follows:

24.

Wotan eloquently greets Walhalla, and then, taking *Fricka* by the hand, leads the procession of the gods into the castle.

The music of this scene is of wondrous eloquence and beauty. Six harps are added to the ordinary orchestral instruments, and as the variegated bridge is seen their arpeggios shimmer like the colors of the rainbow around the broad, majestic RAINBOW MOTIVE:

25. 

Then the stately Walhalla Motive resounds as the gods gaze, lost in admiration, at the Walhalla. It gives

way to the Ring Motive as *Wotan* speaks of the day's ills; and then as he is inspired by the idea of begetting a race of demi-gods to conquer the Nibelungs, there is heard for the first time the SWORD MOTIVE:

26.

But the cunning *Loge* knows that the curse must do its work, even if not until the distant future; and hence as he remains in the foreground looking after the gods, the Loge and Ring Motives are heard.

The cries of the Rhinedaughters greet *Wotan*. They beg him to restore the ring to them. But *Wotan* is deaf to their entreaties. He preferred to give the ring to the giants rather than forfeit *Freia*.

The Walhalla Motive swells to a majestic climax and the gods enter the castle. Amid shimmering arpeggios the Rainbow Motive resounds. The gods have attained the height of their glory—but the Nibelung's curse is still potent, and it will bring woe upon all who have possessed or will possess the ring until it is restored to the Rhinedaughters. *Fasolt* was only the first victim of *Alberich's* curse.

BRÜNNHILDE

"THE VALKYR."

Wotan's enjoyment of Walhalla was destined to be short-lived. Filled with dismay by the death of *Fasolt* in the combat of the giants for the accursed Ring, and impelled by a dread presentiment that the force of the curse would be visited upon the gods, he descended from Walhalla to the abode of the all-wise woman, *Erda*. We must assume that matrimonial obligations were not strictly enforced among the gods. It may have been inferred, from *Fricka's* anxiety to have Walhalla built in order to induce *Wotan* to lead a more domestic life, that the chief god was an old offender against the marriage vow, for though *Fricka* was the guardian goddess of connubial virtue, she does not seem to have been able to hold her spouse in check. To say the least, the chief god was very promiscuous in his attentions to the gentler sex. Thus his visit to *Erda* was not entirely unremunerative, for, while he could not obtain from her a forecast of the future of the gods, she bore him nine daughters. These were the Valkyrs, headed by *Brünnhilde*—the wild horsewomen of the air, who on winged steeds bore the dead heroes to Walhalla, the warrior's heaven. With the aid of the Valkyrs and the heroes they gathered to Walhalla, *Wotan* hoped to repel any assault upon his castle by the enemies of the gods.

But though the host of heroes grew to a goodly num-

ber, the terror of *Alberich's* curse still haunted the chief of the gods. He might have freed himself from it had he returned the Ring and Helmet made of Rhinegold to the Rhinedaughters, from whom *Alberich* filched it; but in his desire to persuade the giants to relinquish *Freia*, whom he had promised to them as a reward for building Walhalla, he, having wrested the Ring from *Alberich*, gave it to the giants instead of returning it to the Rhinedaughters. He saw the giants contending for the possession of the ring and saw *Fasolt* slain—the first victim of *Alberich's* curse. He knows that the giant *Fafner*, having assumed the shape of a huge serpent, now guards the Niebelung treasure, which includes the Ring and the Tarnhelmet, in a cave in the heart of a dense forest. How shall the Rhinegold be restored to the Rhinedaughters?

Wotan hopes that this may be consummated by a human hero who, free from the lust for power which obtains among the gods shall, with a sword of *Wotan's* own forging, slay *Fafner*, gain possession of the Rhinegold and restore it to its rightful owners, thus righting *Wotan's* guilty act and freeing the gods from the curse. To accomplish this *Wotan*, in human guise as Wälse, begets in wedlock with a woman the twins *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde*. How the curse of *Alberich* is visited upon these is related in "The Valkyr."

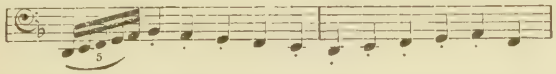
The *dramatis personæ* in "The Valkyr" are *Brünnhilde* and her eight sister valkyrs, *Fricka*, *Sieglinde*, *Siegmund*, *Hunding* (the husband of *Sieglinde*), and *Wotan*. The action begins after the marriage of *Sieglinde* to *Hunding*. The earlier events in the lives of the two Wälsings we learn of in the narratives of *Siegmund* and *Wotan* respectively in the first and second acts of "The Valkyr."

Of course, the Wälsings are in ignorance of the divinity of their father. They know him only as Wälse.

Act I.

The introduction to "The Valkyr" is very different in character from that to "The Rhinegold." In that the Rhine flowing peacefully toward the sea and the innocent gambols of the Rhinedaughters were musically depicted. But "The Valkyr" opens in storm and stress. It is as though the peace and happiness of the first scene of the cycle had vanished from the earth with *Alberich's* abjuration of love, his theft of the gold and *Wotan's* equally treacherous crime. This vorspiel is a masterly representation in tone of a storm gathering for its last infuriated onslaught. There is majestic force in its climax. The elements are unloosed. The wind sweeps through the forest. Lightning flashes in jagged streaks across the black heavens. There is a crash of thunder and the storm has spent its force.

Two leading motives are employed in this introduction. They are the Storm Motive and the Donner Motive (No. 24). The Storm Motive (page 1, line 1) is as follows:

27. 

These themes are as elementary as that of the Fifth Symphony. From the theme of that symphony Beethoven developed a work which by many is considered his grandest. Similarly Wagner has composed, with the use of only the two motives named, the most stupendous storm music we have—not even excepting the

storm of the Pastorale. I call the attention of those who still labor under the error that Wagner's methods are obscure and involved to the vorspiel to "The Valkyr."

In the early portion of this vorspiel only the string instruments are used. Gradually the instrumentation grows more powerful. With the climax we have a tremendous *f f* on the contra tuba and two tympani, followed by the crash of the Donner Motive on the wind instruments.

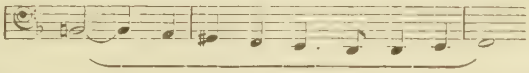
The storm then gradually dies away. Before it has quite passed over, the curtain rises, revealing the large hall of *Hunding's* dwelling. This hall is built around a huge ash-tree, whose trunk and branches pierce the roof, over which the foliage is supposed to spread. There are walls of rough-hewn boards, here and there hung with large plaited and woven hangings. In the right foreground is a large, open hearth; back of it in a recess is the larder, separated from the hall by a woven hanging, half drawn. In the background is a large door. A few steps in the left foreground lead up to the door of an inner room. The furniture of the hall is primitive and rude. It consists chiefly of a table, bench and stools in front of the ash-tree. Only the light of the fire on the hearth illumines the room; though occasionally its fitful gleam is slightly intensified by a distant flash of lightning from the departing storm.

The door in the background is opened from without. *Siegmund*, supporting himself with his hand on the bolt, stands in the entrance. He seems exhausted. His appearance is that of a fugitive who has reached the limit of his powers of endurance. Seeing no one in the hall,

he staggers toward the hearth and sinks upon a bearskin rug before it, with the exclamation:

"Whose hearth this may be,
Here I must rest me."

In an Italian opera we would probably have had at this point a very amusing illustration of the total disregard for dramatic fitness which characterizes the old-fashioned opera. *Siegmund*, though supposed to be exhausted by his flight through the storm, would have had strength enough left to stand near the foot-lights and sing an aria with the regulation bravura passages, and, if he got enough applause, to sing it over again. Then only would he sink down upon the rug exhausted, but whether from singing or from his flight through the storm we would be unable to say. Wagner's treatment of this scene is masterly. As *Siegmund* stands in the entrance we hear the SIEGMUND MOTIVE (page 5, line 5):

28. 

This is a sad, weary strain on 'cellos and basses. It seems the wearier for the burden of an accompanying figure on the horns, beneath which it seems to stagger as *Siegmund* staggers toward the hearth. Thus the music not only reflects *Siegmund's* weary mien, but accompanies most graphically his weary gait. Perhaps Wagner's intention was more metaphysical. Maybe the burden beneath which the Siegmund Motive staggers is the curse of *Alberich*. It is certainly (as we shall see) through that curse that *Siegmund's* life has been one of storm and stress.

When the storm-beaten Wälsung has sunk upon the rug the Siegmund Motive is followed by the Storm Mo-

tive, *pp*—and the storm has died away. The door of the room to the left opens and *Sieglinde* appears. She has heard some one enter, and thinking her husband has returned has come into the hall to meet him. Seeing a stranger stretched upon the bearskin rug she approaches and bends compassionately over him.

Her compassionate action is accompanied by a new motive, which by Wagner's commentators has been entitled the Motive of Compassion. But it seems to me to have a further meaning as expressing the sympathy between two souls, a tie so subtle that it is at first invisible even to those whom it unites. *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde*, it will be remembered, belong to the same race; and though they are at this point of the action unknown to one another, yet, as *Sieglinde* bends over the hunted, storm-beaten *Siegmund*, that subtle sympathy causes her to regard him with more solicitude than would be awakened by any other unfortunate stranger. Hence I have called this motive the MOTIVE OF SYMPATHY—taking sympathy in its double meaning of compassion and affinity of feeling:

29.

The beauty of this brief phrase is enhanced by its unpretentiousness. It wells up from the orchestra as spontaneously as pity mingled with sympathetic sorrow wells up from the heart of a gentle woman. As it is *Siegmund* who has awakened these feelings in *Sieglinde*, the Motive of Sympathy is heard simultaneously with the Siegmund Motive (page 7, line 4).

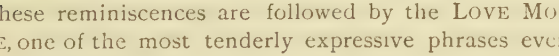
Siegmund, suddenly raising his head, ejaculates, "Water, water!" *Sieglinde* hastily snatches up a drink-

ing-horn and, having quickly filled it at a spring near the house, swiftly returns and hands it to *Siegmund*. As though new hope were engendered in *Siegmund's* breast by *Sieglinde's* gentle ministration the Siegmund Motive rises higher and higher, gathering passion in its upward sweep and then, combined again with the Motive of Sympathy, sinks to an expression of heartfelt gratitude. This passage is scored entirely for strings. Yet no composer, except Wagner, has evoked from a full orchestra sounds richer or more sensuously beautiful (page 8, line 3 and 4).

Siegmund drinks, and then hands the drinking-horn back to *Sieglinde*. As his look falls upon her features he regards them with growing interest. That strange presentiment of affinity is awakened in his breast. But in him, the storm-beaten fugitive, the emotion called forth by *Sieglinde's* gentle acts is deeper than sympathy of feeling. We hear versions of the Siegmund Motive and the Motive of Flight (No. 11). But the former is no longer weary and despairing, nor the latter precipitate. It seems as though *Siegmund*, having found a haven of rest, were recalling his life's vicissitudes with that feeling of sadness

> "Which is not akin to pain,
> And resembles sorrow only
> As the mist resembles rain."

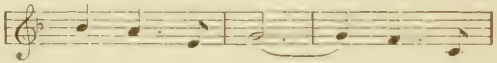
These reminiscences are followed by the LOVE MOTIVE, one of the most tenderly expressive phrases ever penned (page 9, line 3) :

30. 

The melody in the entire passage (that is, in the version of the Siegmund and Flight Motives and in the

Love Motive) is played by a single 'cello, and thus is invested with a mournful beauty which seems the musical expression of the thought in the lines from Longfellow I have just quoted.

The version of the Motive of Flight preceding the Love Motive is as follows:

A. 

The Love Motive is the mainspring of this act. For this act tells the story of love from its inception to its consummation. Similarly in the course of this act the Love Motive rises by degrees of intensity from an expression of the first tender presentiment of affection to the very ecstasy of love.

Siegmund asks with whom he has found shelter. *Sieglinde* replies that the house is *Hunding's*, and she his wife, and requests *Siegmund* to await her husband's return.

> Weaponless am I:
> The wounded guest,
> He will surely give shelter,

is *Siegmund's* reply. With anxious celerity, *Sieglinde* asks him to show her his wounds. But, refreshed by the draught of cool spring water and with hope revived by her sympathetic presence, he gathers force and, raising himself to a sitting posture, exclaims that his wounds are but slight; his frame is still firm, and had sword and shield been half so firm he would not have fled from his foes. His strength was spent in flight through the storm; but the night that sank on his vision has yielded again to the sunshine of *Sieglinde's* presence. At these words the Motive of Sympathy rises

like a sweet hope. *Sieglinde* fills the drinking-horn with mead and offers it to *Siegmund*. He asks her to take the first sip. She does so and then hands it to him. His eyes rest upon her while he drinks. As he returns the drinking-horn to her there are traces of deep emotion in his mien. He sighs and gloomily bows his head. The action at this point is most expressively accompanied by the orchestra. Specially noteworthy are an impassioned upward sweep of the Motive of Sympathy as *Siegmund* regards *Sieglinde* with traces of deep emotion in his mien; the Motive of Flight as he sighs, thinking perhaps that misfortune will soon part them; and the sad, weary Siegmund Motive as he bows his head (page 12, line 4; page 13, lines 1 and 2).

In a voice trembling with emotion, *Siegmund* tells her that she has harbored one whom misfortune follows whithersoever he wends his footsteps. Lest misfortune should through him enter her dwelling he will depart. With firm, determined strides he has reached the door, when *Sieglinde*, forgetting all in her growing passion, calls after him:

Then tarry here!
Not bringest thou woe thither
Where sorrow already reigns.

Upon *Sieglinde*, as one of the Wälsung race, rests the curse of *Alberich*. Her words are followed by a phrase freighted with woe, the Motive of the Wälsung Race or the WÄLSUNG MOTIVE (page 15, line 1):

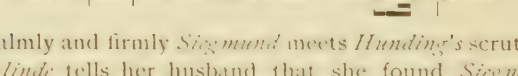
31.

Like the Siegmund Motive it is intoned by the 'cellos and basses.

Siegmund turns and gazes searchingly into her fea-

tures. Sadly, and as though shamed by her outburst of feeling, she lets her eyes sink toward the ground. *Siegmund* returns. He leans against the hearth. His calm, steady gaze rests upon her. She slowly raises her eyes to his. In long silence and with deep emotion they regard each other. In the musical accompaniment to this scene several motives are very effectively combined. Its basis is appropriately formed by the Walsung Motive. Over this rises the Motive of Sympathy. We then hear the Wälsung and Flight Motives combined; next the Love Motive, and finally the Siegmund Motive.

Sieglinde is the first to start from the reverie. She hears *Hunding* leading his horse to the stall. The music suddenly changes in character. Like a premonition of *Hunding's* entrance we hear the HUNDING MOTIVE, *pp*. Then as *Hunding*, armed with spear and shield, stands upon the threshold, this HUNDING MOTIVE—as dark, forbidding and portentous of woe to the two Wälsungs as *Hunding's* sombre visage—resounds with dread power on the tubas (page 16, line 3):

32. 

Calmly and firmly *Siegmund* meets *Hunding's* scrutiny. *Sieglinde* tells her husband that she found *Siegmund* exhausted near the hearth and refreshed him with mead. *Hunding* bids her prepare the meal. He does this with a semblance of graciousness, and similarly his Motive assumes a semblance of graciousness (page 17, lines 4 (last bar) and 5, and page 18, line 1). While preparing the meal *Sieglinde's* glance again and again wanders over to *Siegmund*. *Hunding*, scanning the stranger's

features, detects in them a resemblance to those of *Sieglinde*. "How like unto her!" he mutters to himself, his words being followed by the Motive of Compact (No. 9)—for *Wotan's* surrender of the Rhinegold to the giants in order to thus fulfil his compact with them for building Walhalla necessitated the creation of the Wälsung race, through a scion of which *Wotan* hopes to see the Rhinegold restored to the Rhinedaughters.

The table is spread. The three seat themselves. *Hunding* questions *Siegmund* as to his name. *Siegmund* gazes thoughtfully before him. *Sieglinde* regards him with noticeable interest. *Hunding*, who has observed both, bids *Siegmund* gratify *Sieglinde's* curiosity, and she, little suspecting her husband's thoughts, urges *Siegmund* to tell his story. *Siegmund* in the narrative which follows conceals his identity and that of his father, evidently through fear that *Hunding* may be one of the numerous enemies of the Wälsungs. He calls himself Woeful and his father Wolf. He tells how one day in his boyhood, after hunting with his father, they returned to find their dwelling in ashes, his mother's corpse among the ruins and no trace of his twin sister. Hunted by enemies, he and his father lived a wild life in the forest until in one of the combats they were separated. In vain he sought for a trace of his father. He found only a wild wolf's fur.*

Siegmund sought to mingle with men and women, but wherever he went misfortune and strife followed him.

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* At this point you hear the Walhalla Motive, No. 8, for the father was none other than *Wotan*, known to his human descendants, however, only as Wälse. In *Wotan's* narrative in the next act it will be found that *Wotan* purposely created these misfortunes for *Siegmund* in order to strengthen him for his task

His last combat was in behalf of a maiden whose brothers were forcing her to wed a man she loved not. He defended her till shield and sword were in splinters. Then he fled, reaching *Hunding's* house when almost dead from exhaustion.

The story of *Siegmund* is told in melodious recitative. It is not a melody in the old-fashioned meaning of the term, but it fairly teems with melodiousness. It will have been observed that incidents very different in kind are related by *Siegmund*. It would be impossible to treat this narrative with sufficient variety of expression in a melody. But in Wagner's melodious recitative the musical phrases reflect every incident narrated by *Siegmund*. For instance, when *Siegmund* tells how he went hunting with his father there is joyous freshness and abandon in the music, which, however, suddenly sinks to sadness as he narrates how they returned and found the Wälsung dwelling devastated by enemies. We hear also the Hunding Motive at this point, which thus indicates that those who brought this misfortune upon the Wälsungs were none other than *Hunding* and his kinsmen. As *Siegmund* tells how, when he was separated from his father, he sought to mingle with men and women you hear the Love Motive, while his description of his latest combat is accompanied by the rhythm of the Hunding Motive. Those whom *Siegmund* slew were *Hunding's* kinsmen. Thus *Siegmund's* dark fate has driven him to seek shelter in the house of the very man who is the arch-enemy of his race and is bound by the laws of kinship to avenge on *Siegmund* the death of kinsmen. These are some of the salient points of *Siegmund's* narrative concerning which much more might be written. To me this portion of the score, whether we consider it in con-

nection with the words or as pure music, has far more value than other more popular passages, for instance, *Siegmund's* Love-song; though for some years to come probably the mass of the public will continue to regard the latter as the "gem of the opera."

As *Siegmund* concludes his narative the Wälsung Motive is heard. Gazing with ardent longing toward *Sieglinde*, he says:

> Now know'st thou, questioning wife,
> Why "Peaceful" is not my name.

These words are sung to a lovely phrase. Then, as *Siegmund* rises and strides over to the hearth while *Sieglinde*, pale and deeply affected by his tale, bows her head, there is heard on the horns, bassoons, violas and 'cellos a motive expressive of the heroic fortitude of the Wälsungs in struggling against their fate. It is the MOTIVE OF THE WÄLSUNGS' HEROISM (page 32, line 2):

33.

It is followed by an effective variation of the Wälsung Motive, the whole concluding beautifully with the phrase last sung by *Siegmund*.

Hunding's sombre visage darkens more deeply as he rises. His were the kinsmen of the woman for whom *Siegmund* fought. The laws of hospitality make it imperative that he should give the Wälsung shelter for that night, but he bids *Siegmund* be ready for combat in the morn. He commands *Sieglinde* to prepare his night-draught. She is seen to throw spices into the horn. As she is about to enter the inner chamber she turns her eyes longingly upon the weaponless *Siegmund* and,

having attracted his attention, fixes her gaze significantly upon a spot on the trunk of the ash-tree. As her look falls upon the tree the SWORD MOTIVE (26) is heard.

When *Hunding* has followed *Sieglinde*, *Siegmund* sinks down upon the bearskin near the hearth and broods over his fate. His gloomy thoughts are accompanied by the threatening rhythm of the Hunding Motive and the Sword Motive *in a minor key*, for *Siegmund* is still weaponless. When giving vent to his thoughts, he exclaims:

A sword my father did promise!

the Motive of Compact is heard. But the promise appears to have been delusive and so the Compact Motive soon loses itself in the threatening rhythm of the Hunding Motive. With the strength of desperation *Siegmund* invokes Wälse's aid. He cries:

Wälse! Wälse! Where is thy sword?

The Sword Motive rings out like a shout of triumph. The embers of the fire collapse. In the glare that for a moment falls upon the ash-tree the hilt of a sword whose blade is buried in the trunk of the tree is discernible at the point upon which *Sieglinde's* look last rested. While the Motive of the Sword gently rises and falls, like the coming and going of a lovely memory, *Siegmund* apostrophizes the sheen as the reflection of *Sieglinde's* glance. The embers die out. Night falls upon the scene. But in *Siegmund's* thoughts the memory of that pitying, loving look glimmers on.

The Motive of Sympathy hastening like quick footsteps—and *Sieglinde* is by *Siegmund's* side. She has given *Hunding* a sleeping potion. She will point out a

weapon to *Siegmund*—a sword. If he can wield it she will call him the greatest hero, for only the mightiest can wield it. The music quickens with the subdued excitement in the breasts of the two Wälsungs. You hear the Sword Motive, and above it, on horns, clarinet and oboe, a new motive—that of the WÄLSUNGS' CALL TO VICTORY (page 44, line 1):

34.

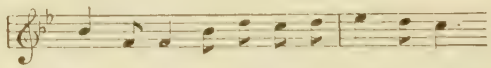
for *Sieglinde* hopes that with the sword the stranger, who has awakened so quickly love in her breast, will overcome *Hunding*. This motive has a resistless, onward sweep. *Sieglinde*, amid the strains of the stately Walhalla Motive, followed by the Sword Motive, narrates the story of the sword. While *Hunding* and his kinsmen were feasting in honor of her forced marriage with him, an aged stranger entered the hall. The men knew him not and shrank from his fiery glance. But upon her his look rested with tender compassion. With a mighty thrust he buried a sword up to its hilt in the trunk of the ash-tree. Whoever drew it from its sheath to him it should belong. The stranger went his way. One after another the strong men tugged at the hilt—but in vain. Then she knew who the aged stranger was and for whom the sword was destined.

The Sword Motive rings out like a joyous shout, and *Sieglinde's* voice mingles with the triumphant notes of the Wälsungs' Call to Victory as she turns to *Siegmund:*

Oh, found I in thee
The friend in need!

The Motive of the Wälsungs' heroism, now no longer

full of tragic import, but forceful and defiant—and *Siegmund* holds *Sieglinde* in his embrace. There is a rush of wind. The woven hangings flap and fall. As the lovers turn, a glorious sight greets their eyes. The landscape is illumined by the moon. Its silver sheen flows down the hills and quivers along the meadows whose grasses tremble in the breeze. All nature seems to be throbbing in unison with the hearts of the lovers. The voices of spring—the season when love opens like the buds—are whispered to *Siegmund* by the orchestra, and as he hears them he greets *Sieglinde* with the LOVE SONG:

35. 

The Love Motive, impassioned, irresistible, sweeps through the harmonies—and Love and Spring are united. The Love Motive also pulsates through *Sieglinde's* ecstatic reply after she has given herself fully up to *Siegmund* in the Flight Motive—for before his coming her woes have fled as winter flies before the coming of spring. With *Siegmund's* exclamation:

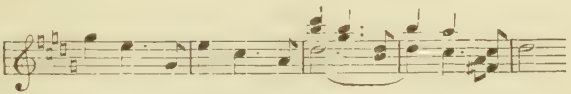
Oh, wondrous vision!
Rapturous woman!

there rises from the orchestra like a vision of loveliness the Motive of Freia (No. 12), the Venus of German mythology. In its embrace it folds this pulsating theme,

B.

which throbs on like a long love-kiss until it seem-

ingly yields to the blandishments of this caressing phrase:



This throbbing, pulsating, caressing music is succeeded by a moment of repose. While the Walhalla Motive is heard *Sieglinde* gazes searchingly into *Siegmund's* features. They are strangely familiar to her. The Love Motive weaves itself around *Siegmund's* words as he also discovers familiar traces in *Sieglinde's* mien. *Sieglinde* once saw her face reflected in the brook—it seems reflected in *Siegmund's* features. She has heard his voice—it was when she heard the echo of her own voice in the forest. His look has already gleamed upon her—it was when the stranger gazed upon her before he thrust the sword into the trunk of the ash-tree.* Was Wolf really his father—is Woeful really his name?

Siegmund proclaims that his father was a wolf to timid foxes. But he whose glance gleamed as gleams *Sieglinde's* glance was *Wälse*. Then, while the orchestra fairly seethes with excitement, *Sieglinde*, almost beside herself, calls jubilantly to him who came to her a stranger out of the storm:

Was Wälse thy father,
And art thou a Wälsung!
Thrust he for thee
His sword in the tree!
Then let me name thee
As I love thee—
Siegmund, I call thee!

* Notice here the combination of Sword and Wälsungs' Heroism Motives, followed by a combination of Sword and Walhalla Motives.

Siegmund leaps upon the table. The Motive of the Wälsungs' Heroism rings out in defiance of the enemies of the race. The Sword Motive—and he has grasped the hilt; the Motive of Compact, ominous of the fatality which hangs over the Wälsungs; the Motive of Renunciation, with its threatening import; then the Sword Motive—brilliant like the glitter of refulgent steel—and *Siegmund* has unsheathed the sword. The Wälsungs' Call to Victory, like a song of triumph; a superb upward sweep of the Sword Motive; the Love Motive, now rushing onward in the very ecstasy of passion, and *Siegmund* holds in his embrace *Sieglinde*—sister and bride!

Act II.

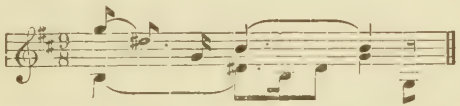
The Vorspiel: With an upward rush of the Sword Motive, resolved into 9-8 time, the orchestra dashes into the Flight Motive. The Sword Motive in this 9-8 rhythm closely resembles the Motive of the Valkyrs' Ride (No. 37) and the Flight Motive in the version in which it appears is much like the Valkyrs' Shout (No. 36). The Ride and the Shout are heard in the course of the vorspiel, the former with tremendous force on trumpets and trombones as the curtain rises upon a wild, rocky mountain pass, at the back of which, through a natural rock-formed arch, a gorge slopes downward. In the foreground stands *Wotan*, armed with spear, shield and helmet. Before him is *Brünnhilde* in the superb costume of the Valkyrs. The stormy spirit of the Vorspiel pervades the music of *Wotan's* command to *Brünnhilde* that she bridle her steed for battle and spur it to the fray to do combat for *Siegmund* against *Hunding*.

Brünnhilde greets *Wotan's* command with the weirdly, joyous SHOUT OF THE VALKYRS:

Hojotoho! Heiaha-ha!

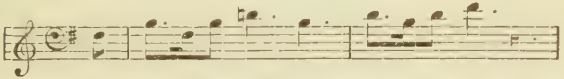
It is the cry of the wild horsewomen of the air, coursing through storm-clouds, their shields flashing back the lightning, their voices mingling with the shrieks of the tempest. Weirder, wilder joy has never found expression in music. The tone-colors employed by Wagner are so graphic that one sees the streaming manes of the steeds of the air and the streaks of lightning playing around their riders, and hears the whistling of the winds. It is a marvelous tone-picture, equaled only by other creations of its creator:

36.



The accompanying figure is based on the Motive of the RIDE OF THE VALKYRS:

37.



Brünnhilde having leapt from rock to rock, to the highest peak of the mountain, again faces *Wotan*, and with delightful banter calls to him that *Fricka* is approaching in her ram-drawn chariot. At the words:

Ha! how she wields her golden scourge,

we hear a version of the Motive of Servitude (No. 3), which occurs again when *Fricka* has appeared and descended from her chariot and advances toward *Wotan*, *Brünnhilde* having meanwhile disappeared behind the mountain height. *Wotan*, through his guilt, has become

the slave of his evil conscience, and the Motive of Servitude now stands for the remorseless energy with which crime pursues its perpetrator.

The ensuing scene between *Wotan* and *Fricka* has been subjected to an immense amount of criticism and ridicule. Even Wagnerian commentators are somewhat timid in their references to it. Von Wolzogen dismisses it with a few words. It is therefore with some pride that I point to an American criticism which is justly appreciative. I refer to the letters which Mr. J. R. G. Hassard contributed from Bayreuth to the *Tribune* in 1876. The lucidity of Mr. Hassard's treatment of the subject, the felicity of his diction, his thorough comprehension of Wagner's theory and his appreciation of its artistic beauty, make these letters worthy to be ranked among the most important contributions to the musical literature of the day. This scene between *Wotan* and *Fricka* Mr. Hassard calls "another of those great dramatic scenes, full of fine discriminations, of forcible declamation, and of almost illimitable suggestiveness, which alone would point out Wagner as the greatest of writers for the musical stage."

The plain facts concerning this scene are these: It is somewhat long, and hence, from a dramatic point of view, perhaps too extended, as it delays the action. But if it may be *partially* condemned dramatically, it must be *entirely* and unreservedly praised musically. Indeed it is musically so fine that to an intelligent listener all sense of lengthiness disappears. *Fricka* is the protector of the marriage vow, and as such she has come in anger to demand from *Wotan* vengeance in behalf of *Hunding*. As she advances hastily toward *Wotan*, her angry, passionate demeanor is reflected by the orchestra, and this

effective musical expression of *Fricka's* ire is often heard in the course of the scene. When near *Wotan* she moderates her pace and her angry demeanor gives way to sullen dignity. This change is also graphically depicted in the orchestra in a phrase based on the fourth bar of the *Fricka* motive (page 89, lines 2 (last bar) and 3).

Wotan feigns ignorance of the cause of *Fricka's* agitation and asks what it is that harasses her. Her reply is preceded by the stern *Hunding* motive. She tells *Wotan* that she, as the protectress of the sanctity of the marriage vow, has heard *Hunding's* voice calling for vengeance upon the Wälsung twins. Her words, "His voice for vengeance is raised," are set to a phrase strongly suggestive of *Alberich's* curse. It seems as though the avenging Nibelung were pursuing *Wotan's* children and thus striking a blow at *Wotan* himself through *Fricka*. The Love motive breathes through *Wotan's* protest that *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde* only yielded to the magic of the spring night. There is a superbly forceful strain when *Wotan* exclaims (page 91):

For when strong spirits are rampant
I rouse them ever to strife.

The wrathful phrase expressive of *Fricka's* anger, heard at the beginning of the scene, introduces her invective against the nuptial union of brother and sister, which reaches a stormy climax with her exclamation:

When was it heard of,
That brother and sister
Were lovers?

With the cool impudence of a *fin de siècle* husband, who is bandying words in a domestic spat, *Wotan* replies:

Now it's been heard of!

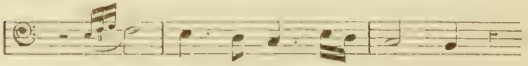
Wotan argues that *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde* are

true lovers, and *Fricka* should smile instead of venting her wrath on them. The motive of the Love Song, the Love Motive and the caressing phrase heard in the love scene are beautifully blended with *Wotan's* words. In strong contrast to these motives is the music in *Fricka's* outburst of wrath, introduced by the phrase reflecting her ire, which is repeated several times in the course of this episode. This is followed at the words,

Why mourn I thus o'er virtue and vows,

by a phrase which has a touch of pathos, for she is complaining of *Wotan's* faithlessness. When she upbraids him for his lapses with *Erda*, the results of which were the Valkyrs, you hear the motive of the Ride of the Valkyrs. The passage concludes with a paroxysm of rage, *Fricka* bidding *Wotan* complete his work and let the Wälsungs in their triumph trample her under their feet. *Wotan* explains to her why he begat the Wälsung race and the hopes he has founded upon it. But *Fricka* mistrusts him. What can mortals accomplish that the gods, who are far mightier than mortals, cannot accomplish? *Hunding* must be avenged on *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde*. *Wotan* must withdraw his protection from *Siegmund*. Now appears a phrase which expresses *Wotan's* impotent wrath—impotent because *Fricka* brings forward the unanswerable argument that if the Wälsungs go unpunished by her, as guardian of the marriage vow, she, the Queen of the Gods, will be held up to the scorn of mankind.

MOTIVE OF WOTAN'S WRATH:

38.  etc.

Wotan would fain save the Wälsungs. But *Fricka's*

argument is conclusive. He cannot protect *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde*, because their escape from punishment would bring degradation upon the queen-goddess and the whole race of the gods, and result in their immediate fall. *Wotan's* wrath rises at the thought of sacrificing his beloved children to the vengeance of *Hunding*, but he is impotent. His far-reaching plans are brought to nought. He sees the hope of having the Ring restored to the Rhinedaughters by the voluntary act of a hero of the Wälsung race vanish. The curse of *Alberich* hangs over him like a dark, threatening cloud.

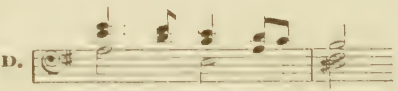
Brünnhilde's joyous shouts are heard from the height. *Wotan* exclaims that he had summoned the Valkyr to do battle for *Siegmund*. In broad, stately measures, *Fricka* proclaims that her honor shall be guarded by *Brünnhilde's* shield and demands of *Wotan* an oath that in the coming combat the *Wälsung* shall fall. *Wotan* takes the oath and throws himself dejectedly down upon a rocky seat. *Fricka* strides toward the back. She pauses a moment with a gesture of queenly command before *Brünnhilde*, who has led her horse down the height and into a cave to the right. It will be remembered that when in the beginning of this scene *Fricka* advanced toward *Wotan* we heard a phrase expressive of sullen dignity. The scene closes with this phrase, but now no longer sullen. It rises in proud beauty like a queenly woman exacting homage. This is one of those finely artistic touches in which Wagner is peerless.

I have purposely gone somewhat into the details of this scene because it is still so much misunderstood. Yet it is one of Wagner's finest conceptions, and as such it will doubtless be universally ranked at some future

day. Aside from the contrast which *Fricka*, as the champion of virtue, affords to the forbidden revels of the spring night—a contrast of truly dramatic value—we witness the pathetic spectacle of a mighty god vainly struggling to avert ruin from his race. That it is to irresistible fate and not merely to *Fricka* that *Wotan* succumbs is made clear by the darkly ominous notes of *Alberich's* curse, which resound as *Wotan*, wrapt in gloomy brooding, leans back against the rocky seat, and also when, in a paroxysm of despair, he gives vent to his feelings, a passage which for overpowering intensity of expression stands out even from among Wagner's writings. The final words of this outburst of grief,

The saddest I among all men,

are set to this variant of the Motive of Renunciation; the meaning of this phrase having been expanded from the renunciation of love by *Alberich* to cover the renunciation of happiness which is forced upon *Wotan* by avenging fate:



Brünnhilde casts away shield, spear and helmet, and sinking down at *Wotan's* feet looks up to him with affectionate anxiety. Here we see in the Valkyr the touch of tenderness, without which a truly heroic character is never complete.

Musically it is beautifully expressed by the Love Motive, which, when *Wotan*, as if awakening from a reverie, fondly strokes her hair, goes over into the Siegmund Motive. It is over the fate of his beloved Wälsungs

Wotan has been brooding. Immediately following *Brünnhilde's* words,

What am I were I not thy will,

is a wonderfully soft yet rich melody on four horns. It is one of those beautiful details in which Wagner's works abound, yet, although these details are as numerous as they are beautiful, they seem to have escaped the attention of a good many critics. Or have these critics made an effort not to perceive them?

In *Wotan's* narrative, which now follows, the chief of the gods tells *Brünnhilde* of the events which have brought this sorrow upon him, of his failure to restore the stolen gold to the Rhinedaughters; of his dread of *Alberich's* curse; how she and her sister Valkyrs were born to him by *Erda*; of the necessity that a hero should without aid of the gods gain the Ring and Tarnhelmet from *Fafner* and restore the Rhinegold to the Rhinedaughters; how he begot the Wälsungs and inured them to hardships in the hope that one of the race would free the gods from *Alberich's* curse; of a prophecy uttered by *Erda*, that the end of the gods would be wrought if *Alberich* could win a woman as wife and beget a son; that *Alberich* had won a wife and an heir was about to be born to him.

It will have been observed that a considerable portion of *Wotan's* narrative covers some of the events which were enacted in Rhinegold. Hence a portion of the narrative is unnecessary and therefore undoubtedly faulty from a purely dramatic standpoint. It may also be not unjustly questioned if in other portions the narrative does not go into details beyond the dramatic requirements. Both the scene between *Wotan* and *Fricka* and

the narrative are too long to be given in their entirety in a performance which begins as late as eight P. M. When, however, Wagner's works are performed as they are at Bayreuth, where the performances begin at four in the afternoon and there are long intermissions during which the listeners can saunter about the grounds surrounding the theatre, not a note should be omitted. There cannot be under such conditions the faintest suggestion of fatigue from an undue mental strain, even on the part of those who have become so accustomed to the insipidness of the old-fashioned opera that they are appalled at the mere thought—provided they retain the power of thinking—of mental effort in connection with a musico-dramatic work.

Whatever fault may be found with *Wotan's* narrative—or rather portions of it—from a purely dramatic point of view, it is musically most expressive from its first accents, uttered in a choked, suppressed voice, to its eloquent climax. The motives heard will be recognized, except one, which is new. This is expressive of the stress to which the gods are subjected through *Wotan's* crime. It is first heard when *Wotan* tells of the hero who alone can regain the ring. It is the MOTIVE OF THE GODS' STRESS:

39.

Excited by remorse and despair *Wotan* bids farewell to the glory of the gods. Then he in terrible mockery blesses the Nibelung's heir. Terrified by this outburst of wrath *Brünnhilde* asks what her duty shall be in the approaching combat. *Wotan* commands her to do *Fricka's* bidding and withdraw protection from *Sieg-*

mund. In vain *Brünnhilde* pleads for the Wälsung whom she knows *Wotan* loves, and wished a victor until *Fricka* exacted a promise from him to avenge *Hunding*. But her pleading is in vain. *Wotan* is no longer the all-powerful chief of the gods—through his breach of faith he has become the slave of fate. Hence we hear, as *Wotan* rushes away, driven by chagrin, rage and despair, chords heavy with the crushing force of fate.

Slowly and sadly *Brünnhilde* bends down for her weapons, her actions being accompanied by the Valkyr Motive. Bereft of its stormy impetuosity it is as trist as her thoughts. Lost in sad reflections, which find beautiful expression in the orchestra, she turns toward the background. Suddenly the sadly expressive phrases are interrupted by the Motive of Flight. Looking down into the valley the Valkyr perceives *Siegmund* and *Sieglinde* approaching in hasty flight. She then disappears in the cave. With magnificent crescendo the Motive of Flight reaches its climax and the two Wälsungs are seen through the natural arch. *Sieglinde* is hastening in advance of *Siegmund*. Seeking to restrain her flight, he clasps her tenderly. She stares wildly before her. Her terror of *Hunding's* pursuit has unsettled her reason. *Siegmund* speaks to her in gentle tones. Like a reminiscence of happier moments there is heard the wooing, caressing phrase of the love scene in the first act. *Sieglinde* gazes with growing rapture into *Siegmund's* eyes and throws her arms around his neck. A fiercely impassioned phrase accompanies her impetuous action. Then as her mien grows mournful we hear the sadly reflective version of the Motive of Flight which preceded the Love Motive in the first act. "Away! Away!" she shrieks, suddenly starting up from her reverie.

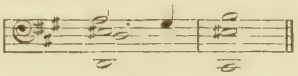
There is a dramatic change in the music which wildly follows her terrified ejaculations. There is noble calmness and determination in *Siegmund's* assuring words to her. They are introduced by the Motive of the Wälsung's Fortitude—that eloquent phrase, expressive of the fortitude with which the race has borne the struggle with adverse fate. Here *Siegmund* proposes to try the steel of his sword with *Hunding*. Then are heard in the distance the ominous notes of *Hunding's* horn, summoning his kinsmen to the pursuit of his wife and her lover. *Sieglinde* starts up in despair. Does not *Siegmund* hear the avenger's call, bidding the sleuth-hounds join him in the hunt for human prey? An agonizing shriek and *Sieglinde* grows suddenly rigid and stares vacantly before her, as if demented.

Eight chords of terrific force mark the climax of this scene.

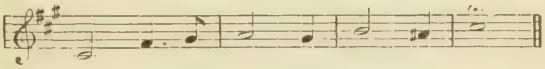
In the insanity of her terror she believes that *Siegmund* is about to desert her, and with a wild cry of despair she throws herself upon his breast. A moment later she hears the distant notes of *Hunding's* horns, and starts up again in terror. She now believes that *Siegmund* has deserted her. Her agonized ejaculations, her heart-rending grief these find wonderfully vivid expression. With a furious crescendo the climax of the scene is reached, and *Sieglinde* sinks fainting into *Siegmund's* arms.

Without releasing his hold upon her, *Siegmund* lets himself down upon a rocky seat, so that when he assumes a sitting posture her head rests on his lap. Silently he gazes upon her, and then, while the Love Motive whispers of memories of bliss, he presses a kiss upon her brow.

The MOTIVE OF FATE—so full of solemn import—is now heard :

40. 

Brünnhilde, leading her horse by the bridle, appears in the entrance of the cave, and advances slowly and solemnly to the front; then pauses and gazes upon *Siegmund*. While her earnest look rests upon him, there is heard the MOTIVE OF THE DEATH-SONG, a tristly prophetic strain :

41. 

Brünnhilde advances and then, pausing again, leans with one hand upon her charger's neck, and grasping shield and spear with the other, gazes upon *Siegmund*. Then there rises from the orchestra, in strains of rich, soft, alluring beauty, the Walhalla Motive. The Fate, Death-Song and Walhalla Motives recur, and *Siegmund*, raising his eyes and meeting *Brünnhilde's* look, questions her and receives her answers. The episode is so fraught with solemnity that the shadow of death seems to have fallen upon the scene. The solemn beauty of the music impresses itself the more upon the listener because of the agitated, agonized scene which preceded it. The alluring pleasures of Walhalla are depicted by the Walhalla Motive, beautifully blended with the Motive of the Valkyrs' Ride, as *Brünnhilde* announces that many warriors will greet *Siegmund's* coming; by the Walhalla Motive alone when she tells him that he will meet his

father in Walhalla; by the Freia Motive, borne airily upon the buoyant Motive of the Valkyrs' Ride, as she promises him that beauteous wish-maidens will wait upon him in the warriors' heaven. But these allurements are nought to him. "Shall *Siegmund* there embrace *Sieglinde*?" he asks; and when *Brünnhilde* answers in the negative he spurns the delights she has held out to him. Here he will stand and meet *Hunding*. *Brünnhilde* tells him that the sword upon which he relies will be shivered. He draws it to take *Sieglinde's* life and so pierce the fruit of their love. Moved to admiration by his heroic love, *Brünnhilde*, in a jubilant outburst, as though a sorrow had been lifted from her heart, proclaims that she will give victory to *Siegmund*.

When she has disappeared the scene gradually darkens. Heavy storm-clouds veil the crags and hide the peak from view. *Siegmund* tenderly soliloquizes over *Sieglinde*, and then kissing her gently upon the forehead, disappears among the clouds to meet *Hunding*. *Sieglinde* gradually regains her senses. The mountain is now veiled in black thunder-clouds. *Hunding's* voice is heard summoning *Siegmund* to combat. She staggers toward the peak. It is suddenly illumined by lightning. In the lurid light the combatants and *Brünnhilde* hovering above *Siegmund* are seen. As *Siegmund* aims a deadly stroke at *Hunding* a reddish glow diffuses itself through the clouds. In it *Wotan* appears. He interposes his spear. As the sword strikes it, *Siegmund's* weapon is shattered and *Hunding* thrusts his spear into the Wälsung's breast. *Sieglinde*, with a wild shriek, falls to the ground. *Brünnhilde* rushes down to her, lifts her upon her steed and urges the charger down the defile. With a gesture of angry contempt *Wotan* fells

Hunding, and then, with a threat to visit upon *Brünnhilde* dire punishment for her revolt against his will, he disappears amid lightning and thunder. It is impossible in words to do justice to the savage beauty of this closing scene. The music is of the most dramatic character. The warring elements seem to add to the terror of this battle among the clouds. Amid these dark scenes *Alberich's* second victim finds his death.

Act III.

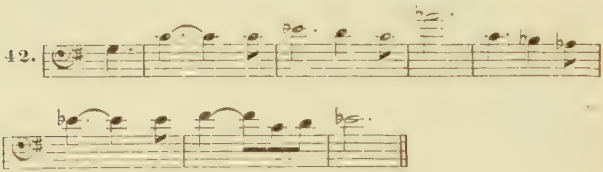
The third act opens with the famous ride of the Valkyrs, a number so familiar that detailed reference to it is scarcely necessary. The wild maidens of Walhalla coursing upon winged steeds through storm-clouds, their weapons flashing in the gleam of lightning, their weird laughter mingling with the crash of thunder as they bear slain warriors to the hero's heaven—such is the episode Wagner has depicted with marvelous art. The climax of barbaric joy is reached when the voices of six of the sisters unite in the shout, Hojotoho! Heiha! When eight of the Valkyrs have gathered upon the rocky summit of the mountain, which is their trysting-place, they see *Brünnhilde* approaching.

The Motive of the Gods' Stress is the chief theme heard in the ensuing scene when *Brünnhilde* tells of her disobedience to *Wotan* and begs the Valkyrs aid her to shield *Sieglinde*.

The latter, who has been lost in gloomy brooding, starts at her rescuer's supplication and in strains replete with mournful beauty begs that she may be left to her fate and follow *Siegmund* in death. The glorious prophecy of *Brünnhilde*, in which she now foretells the

birth of *Siegfried* to *Sieglinde*, is based upon the SIEGFRIED MOTIVE.

42.



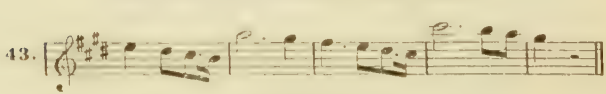
Sieglinde in joyous frenzy blesses *Brünnhilde* and hastens to find safety in a dense forest to the eastward, the same forest in which *Fafner*, in the form of a serpent, guards the Rhinegold treasures.

Wotan, in hot pursuit of *Brunnhilde*, reaches the mountain summit. In vain her sisters entreat him to spare her. He harshly threatens them unless they cease their entreaties, and with wild cries of fear they hastily depart. In the ensuing scene between *Wotan* and *Brünnhilde*, in which the latter seeks to justify her action, is heard one of the most beautiful themes of the cycle.

It is the MOTIVE OF BRÜNNHILDE'S PLEADING, which finds its loveliest expression when she addresses *Wotan* in the passage beginning:

Thou, who this love within my breast inspired.

43.



In the scene there are many passages of rare beauty and many climaxes of great dramatic power. The principal motives employed therein the listener will readily

recognize, so that it is only necessary to give in notation the SLUMBER MOTIVE:

44. etc.

This great scene between *Wotan* and *Brünnhilde* is introduced by an orchestral passage. The Valkyr lies in penitence at her father's feet. In the expressive orchestral measures the Motive of Wotan's Wrath mingles with that of Brünnhilde's Pleading. The motives thus form a prelude to the scene in which the Valkyr seeks to appease her father's anger, not through a specious plea, but by laying bare the promptings of a noble heart, which forced her, against the chief god's command, to intervene for *Siegmund*. The Motive of Brünnhilde's Pleading is heard in its simplest form at *Brünnhilde's* words:

Was it so shameful what I have done,

and it may be noticed that as she proceeds the Motive of Wotan's Wrath, heard in the accompaniment, grows less stern until with her plea,

Soften thy wrath,

it assumes a tone of regretful sorrow.

Wotan's feelings toward *Brünnhilde* have softened for the time from anger to grief that he must mete out punishment for her disobedience. In his reply excitement subsides to gloom. It would be difficult to point to other music more touchingly expressive of deep contrition than the phrase in which *Brünnhilde* pleads that *Wotan* himself taught her to love *Siegmund*. It is here

that the Motive of Brünnhilde's Pleading assumes the form in the notation given above. Then we hear from *Wotan* that he had abandoned *Siegmund* to his fate, because he had lost hope in the cause of the gods and wished to end his woe in the wreck of the world. The weird terror of the Curse Motive hangs over this outburst of despair. In broad and beautiful strains *Wotan* then depicts *Brünnhilde* blissfully yielding to her emotions when she intervened for *Siegmund*.

At last *Brünnhilde* seeks, with the prophecy of *Siegfried*, to move *Wotan* from his purpose, which is to punish her by causing her to fall into a deep sleep and thus become the prey of man. The motive of her pleading, reaching a magnificent climax, passes over to the stately Siegfried Motive as she prays *Wotan* to surround her sleeping form with horrors which only a true hero will dare strive to overcome. Let him conjure up fire 'round about her! *Wotan* raises her to her feet and gazes, overcome with deep emotion, into her eyes. After a majestic orchestral passage there begins *Wotan's* farewell to *Brünnhilde*, which in all musico-dramatic numbers for bass voice has no peer. Such tender, mournful beauty has never found expression in music —and this, whether we regard the vocal part or the orchestral accompaniment in which the Slumber Motive quoted above is prominent. *Wotan* gently leads *Brünnhilde* to a table rock, upon which she sinks. He closes her helmet and covers her with her shield. Then, pointing his spear toward a huge rock, he invokes *Loge*. Tongues of fire leap up from crevices in the rocks. Flickering flames break out on all sides. The forest glows with fire. The magic conflagration—wildly fluttering flames —surrounds *Wotan* and *Brünnhilde*. He gazes fondly

upon her form and then vanishes among the flames. The Slumber Motive, the Magic Fire Motive and the Siegfried Motive combine to place the music of this scene with the most brilliant and beautiful portion of our heritage from the master-musician. Toward the close of this glorious finale we hear again the ominous muttering of the Motive of Fate. *Brünnhilde* may be saved from ignominy, *Siegfried* may be born to *Sieglinde*—but the crushing weight of the hand of fate rests upon the race of the gods.

"SIEGFRIED."

The Nibelungs were not present in the dramatic action of "The Valkyr," though the sinister influence of *Alberich* shaped the tragedy of *Siegmund's* death. In "Siegfried" several characters of "The Rhinegold," who do not take part in "The Valkyr," reappear. These are the Nibelungs *Alberich* and *Mime*; the giant *Fafner*, who in the guise of a serpent guards the ring, the tarnhelmet and the Nibelung hoard in a cavern, and *Erda*. *Siegfried* has been born of *Sieglinde*, who died in giving birth to him. This scion of the Wälsung race has been reared by *Mime*, who is plotting to obtain possession of *Fafner's* treasures, and hopes to be aided in his designs by the lusty youth. *Wotan*, disguised as a wanderer, is watching the course of events, again hopeful that a hero of the Wälsung race will free the gods from *Alberich's* curse. Surrounded by magic fire, *Brünnhilde* still lies in deep slumber on the rock of the Valkyrs.

The vorspiel of "Siegfried" is expressive of *Mime's* planning and plotting. It begins with music of a mysterious, brooding character. Mingling with this is the Motive of the Hoard (No. 20), familiar from "The Rhinegold." Then is heard the Nibelung Motive (No. 18), and later, joined with it, the Motive of the Nibelung's Servitude (No. 3). After reaching a forceful climax the Motive of the Nibelung passes over to the Motive of the Ring (No. 6), which rises from pianissimo to a crash of tremendous power. The ring is to

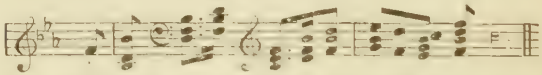
SIEGFRIED.

be the prize of all *Mime's* plotting, when *Siegfried*, with a sword of *Mime's* forging, shall have slain *Fafner*. The felicitous use of the Sword Motive toward the close of the vorspiel will be readily recognized, as well as the aptness of the Nibelung and Servitude Motives as expressive of *Mime's* slavish labors, and gaining further point when joined by the Dragon or SERPENT Motive.

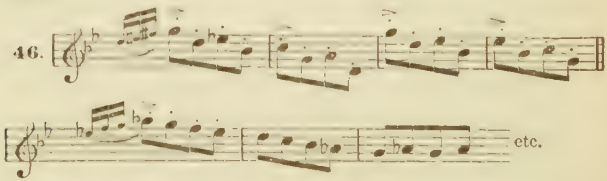
The three motives last named are prominent in the opening scene, which shows *Mime* forging a sword at a natural forge formed in a rocky cave. In a soliloquy he discloses the purpose of his labors and laments that *Siegfried* shivers every sword which has been forged for him. Could he (*Mime*) but unite the pieces of *Siegmund's* sword! At this thought the Sword Motive rings out brilliantly, and is jubilantly repeated, accompanied by a variant of the Walhalla Motive. For if the pieces of the sword were welded together, and *Siegfried* were with it to slay *Fafner*, *Mime* could surreptitiously obtain possession of the ring, slay *Siegfried*, rule over the gods in Walhalla and circumvent *Alberich's* plans for regaining the hoard. This last aspect of *Mime's* plan is musically expressed by the mocking phrase heard when in "The Rhinegold" *Wotan* and *Loge* made sport over the pinioned *Alberich*. This passage will be found on pages 8 and 9 of the Kleinmichel piano-score with words, beginning at bar 16 of the former and ending at 3 of the latter. The nine bars are an admirable example of the wealth of meaning in Wagner's music-drama scores, a meaning perfectly intelligible to anyone who approaches the subject in a serious, studious mood.

Mime is still at work when *Siegfried* enters, clad in a wild forest garb. Over it a silver horn is slung

by a chain. The sturdy youth has captured a bear He leads it by a bast rope, with which he gives it full play, so that it can make a dash at *Mime*. As the latter flees terrified behind the forge, *Siegfried* gives vent to his high spirits in shouts of laughter. Musically his buoyant nature is expressed by a theme inspired by the fresh, joyful spirit of a wild, woodland life. It may be called, to distinguish it from the Siegfried Motive, the MOTIVE OF SIEGFRIED THE FEARLESS.

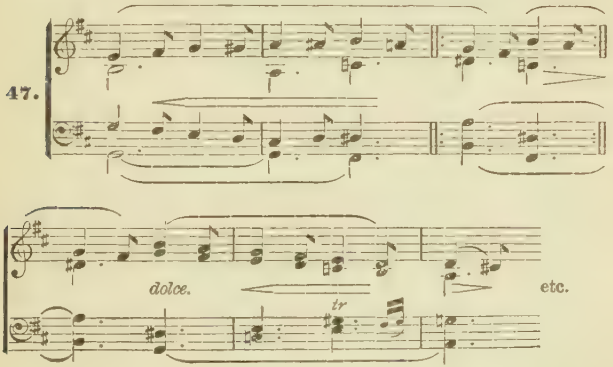
45. 

It pervades with its joyous impetuosity the ensuing scene, in which *Siegfried* has his sport with *Mime*, until tiring of it, he loosens the rope from the bear's neck and drives the animal back into the forest. In a pretty, graceful phrase *Siegfried* tells how he blew his horn, hoping it would be answered by a pleasanter companion than *Mime*. Then he examines the sword which *Mime* has been forging. The Siegfried Motive resounds as he inveighs against the weapon's weakness, until, as he shivers the sword on the anvil, the orchestra with a rush takes up the MOTIVE OF SIEGFRIED THE IMPETUOUS.

46. 

This is a theme full of youthful snap and dash. It alternates effectively with a contraction of the Nibelung

Smithy Motive, while *Siegfried* angrily scolds *Mime* and the latter protests. Finally *Mime* tells *Siegfried* how he tenderly reared him from infancy. The music here is as simple and pretty as a folk-song, for *Mime's* reminiscences of *Siegfried's* infancy are set to a charming melody, as though *Mime* were recalling to *Siegfried's* memory a cradle song of those days. But *Siegfried* grows impatient. If *Mime* tended him so kindly, why should *Mime* be so repulsive to him; and yet why should he, in spite of *Mime's* repulsiveness, always return to the cave? The dwarf explains that he is to *Siegfried* what the father is to the fledgling. This leads to a beautiful lyric episode. *Siegfried* says that he saw the birds mating, the deer pairing, the she-wolf nursing her cubs. Whom shall *he* call *Mother?* Who is *Mime's* wife? This episode is pervaded by a lovely, tender motive—the MOTIVE OF LOVE-LIFE:



Mime endeavors to persuade *Siegfried* that he is his father and mother in one. But *Siegfried* has noticed

that the young of birds and deer and wolves look like the parents. He has seen his features reflected in the brook and knows he does not resemble the hideous *Mime*. The notes of the Love-Life Motive pervade like woodland strains the musical accompaniment of this episode, in which, when *Siegfried* speaks of seeing his own likeness, we also hear the Siegfried Motive. The scene which follows is full of mournful beauty. *Mime*, forced by *Siegfried* to speak the truth, tells of *Sieglinde's* death while giving birth to *Siegfried*. Throughout this scene we find reminiscences of the first act of "The Valkyr," the Wälsung Motive, Motive of Sympathy and Love Motive. Finally, when *Mime* produces as evidence of the truth of his words the two pieces of *Siegmund's* sword, the Sword Motive rings out brilliantly. *Siegfried* exclaims that *Mime* must weld the pieces into a trusty weapon. Here (page 44, line 1) the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless assumes the form in which it is quoted on page 66. The Motive of Siegfried the Impetuous breaks in upon it and the Sword Motive throws its lustre over the music. Then follows Siegfried's Wander Song, so full of joyous abandon. Once the sword welded, he will leave the hated *Mime* forever. As the fish darts through the water, as the bird flies so free, he will flee from the repulsive dwarf. With joyous exclamations he runs from the cave into the forest.

In the scenes of which I have just spoken, the frank, boisterous nature of *Siegfried* is charmingly portrayed. His buoyant vivacity finds capital expression in the Motives of Siegfried the Fearless, Siegfried the Impetuous and his Wander Song, while the vein of tenderness in his character seems to run through the Love-Life Motive. His harsh treatment of *Mime* is not brutal; for

Siegfried frankly avows his loathing of the dwarf, and we feel, knowing *Mime's* plotting against the young Wälsung, that *Siegfried's* hatred is the spontaneous aversion of a frank nature for an insidious one.

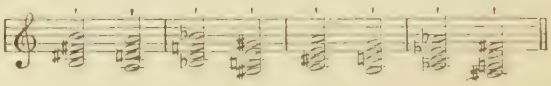
After *Siegfried* has disappeared in the forest, there is a gloomy soliloquy for *Mime*, interrupted by the entrance of *Wotan*, disguised as a wanderer. The ensuing scene is one of those lapses from dramatic effectiveness which we find in Wagner, and which surprise us so much, because Wagner was really an inspired dramatist, his works being constructed on fine dramatic lines, the action worked up to fine climaxes and the characters drawn in bold, broad strokes. But occasionally he has committed the error against the laws of dramatic construction of unduly prolonging a scene and thus retarding the dramatic action.

The scene between the *Wanderer* and *Mime* covers twenty-seven pages in the Kleinmichel piano-score with words, yet it advances us only one step in the dramatic action. As the *Wanderer* enters, *Mime* is in despair because he cannot weld the pieces of *Siegmund's* sword. When the *Wanderer* departs, he has prophesied that only he who does not know what fear is can weld the fragments, and that through this fearless hero *Mime* shall lose his life. This prophecy is reached through a somewhat curious process, which must be unintelligible to anyone who has not made a study of the libretto. The *Wanderer*, seating himself, wagers his head that he can correctly answer any three questions which *Mime* may put to him. *Mime* then asks: What is the race born in the earth's deep bowels? The *Wanderer* answers: The Nibelungs. *Mime's* second question is: What race dwells on the earth's back? The *Wanderer* replies:

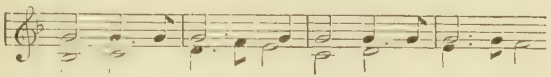
The race of the giants. *Mime* finally asks: What race dwells on cloudy heights? The *Wanderer* answers: The race of the gods. The *Wanderer*, having thus answered correctly *Mime's* three questions, now puts three questions to *Mime*: "What is that noble race which *Wotan* ruthlessly dealt with, and yet which he deemeth most dear?" *Mime* answers correctly: "The Wälsungs." Then the *Wanderer* asks: "What sword must *Siegfried* then strike with, dealing to *Fafner* death?" *Mime* answers correctly: "With *Siegmund's* sword." "Who," asks the *Wanderer*, "can weld its fragments?" *Mime* is terrified, for he cannot answer. Then *Wotan* utters the prophecy of the fearless hero. Whoever will read over this scene will observe that in *Wotan's* answers the story of "The Rhinegold" is partially retold, and that in *Mime's* answers we have a rehearsal of "The Valkyr." Of course the narrative repetitions of the plots of preceding music-dramas are undramatic. But I have an idea that Wagner, conjecturing that in many opera-houses his tetralogy would not be given as a whole, and that in some only one or two of the four music-dramas constituting it would be played, purposely introduced these narrative repetitions in order to familiarize the audience with what preceded the particular music-drama.

But if the scene is dramatically defective, it is musically most eloquent. It is introduced by two motives, representing *Wotan* as the *Wanderer*. The mysterious chords of the former seem characteristic of WOTAN'S DISGUISE.

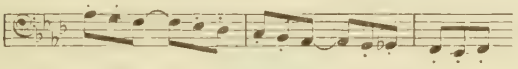
48.



The latter, with its plodding, heavily-tramping movement, is the MOTIVE OF WOTAN'S WANDERING.

49. 

The third new motive found in this scene is characteristically expressive of the CRINGING MIME.

50.  etc.

Several familiar motives from "The Rhinegold" and "The Valkyr" are heard here. The Motive of Compact (No. 9), so powerfully expressive of the binding force of law, the Nibelung (No. 18), Giants' (No. 13) and Walhalla (No. 8) motives from "The Rhinegold," and the Wälsungs' Heroism motives from the first act of "The Valkyr," are among these.

When the *Wanderer* has vanished in the forest *Mime* sinks back on his stool in despair. Staring after *Wotan* into the sunlit forest, the shimmering rays flitting over the soft green mosses with every movement of the branches and each tremor of the leaves seem to him like flickering flames and treacherous will-o'-the-wisps. We hear the Loge Motive (*Loge* being the god of fire) familiar from "The Rhinegold" and the finale of "The Valkyr." At last *Mime* rises to his feet in terror. He seems to see *Fafner* in his serpent's guise appoaching to devour him, and in a paroxysm of fear he falls with a shriek behind the anvil. Just then *Siegfried* bursts out of the thicket, and with the fresh, buoyant Wander-song and the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless, the weird mystery

which hung over the former scene is dispelled. *Siegfried* looks about him for *Mime* until he sees the dwarf lying behind the anvil.

Laughingly the young Wälsung asks the dwarf if he has thus been welding the sword. "The sword? The sword?" repeats *Mime*, confusedly, as he advances, and his mind wanders back to *Wotan's* prophecy of the fearless hero. Regaining his senses, he tells *Siegfried* there is one thing he has yet to learn, namely, to be afraid; that his mother charged him (*Mime*) to teach fear to him (*Siegfried*). At this point there is heard a combination of the Wälsung Motive and the Nibelung Motive in its contracted form as it previously occurs in this act. *Mime* asks *Siegfried* if he has never felt his heart beating when in the gloaming he heard strange sounds and saw weirdly glimmering lights in the forest. *Siegfried* replies that he never has. He knows not what fear is. If it is necessary before he goes forth in quest of adventure to learn what fear is he would like to be taught. But how can *Mime* teach him?

The Magic Fire Motive and Brünnhilde's Slumber Motive, familiar from Wotan's Farewell, and the Magic Fire scene in the third act of "The Valkyr" are heard here, the former depicting the weirdly glimmering lights with which *Mime* has sought to infuse dread into *Siegfried's* breast, the latter prophesying that, penetrating fearlessly the fiery circle, *Siegfried* will reach *Brünnhilde*. Then *Mime* tells *Siegfried* of *Fafner*, thinking thus to strike terror into the young Wälsung's breast. But far from it! *Siegfried* is incited by *Mime's* words to meet *Fafner* in combat. Has *Mime* welded the fragments of *Siegmund's* sword, asks *Siegfried*. The dwarf confesses his impotency. *Siegfried* seizes the fragments.

He will forge his own sword. Here begins the great scene of the forging of the sword. Like a shout of victory the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless rings out and the orchestra fairly glows as *Siegfried* heaps a great mass of coal on the forge-hearth, and, fanning the heat, begins to file away at the fragments of the sword.

The roar of the fire, the sudden intensity of the fierce white heat to which the young Wälsung fans the glow—these we would respectively hear and see were the music given without scenery or action, so graphic is Wagner's score. The Sword Motive leaps like a brilliant tongue of fire over the heavy thuds of a forceful variant of the Motive of Compact, till brightly gleaming runs add to the brilliancy of the score, which reflects all the quickening, quivering effulgence of the scene. How the music flows like a fiery flood and how it hisses as *Siegfried* pours the molten contents of the crucible into a mold and then plunges the latter into water! The glowing steel lies on the anvil and *Siegfried* swings the hammer. With every stroke his joyous excitement is intensified. At last the work is done. He brandishes the sword and with one stroke cleaves the anvil from top to bottom. With the crash of the Sword Motive, united with the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless, the orchestra dashes into a furious prestissimo, and *Siegfried*, shouting with glee, holds his sword aloft.

Act II.

The second act opens with a darkly portentous vorspiel. On the very threshold of it we meet *Fafner* in his motive, which is so clearly based on the Giant Motive that there is no necessity for quoting it. Through themes which are familiar from earlier por-

tions of the work, the vorspiel rises to a crashing fortissimo. The curtain lifts on a thick forest. At the back is the entrance to *Fafner's* cave, the lower part of which is hidden by rising ground in the middle of the stage, which slopes down toward the back. In the darkness the outlines of a figure are dimly discerned. It is the Nibelung *Alberich*, haunting the domain which hides the treasures of which he was despoiled. The Motive of the Nibelung's Malevolence accompanies his malicious utterances. From the forest comes a gust of wind. A bluish light gleams from the same direction. *Wotan*, still in the guise of a wanderer, enters.

The ensuing scene between *Alberich* and the *Wanderer* is, from a dramatic point of view, episodical. For this and the further reason that the reader will readily recognize the motives occurring in it, detailed consideration of it is unnecessary. Suffice it to say that the fine self-poise of *Wotan* and the maliciously restless character of *Alberich* are superbly contrasted. When *Wotan* has departed the Nibelung slips into a rocky crevice, where he remained hidden when *Siegfried* and *Mime* enter. *Mime* endeavors to awaken dread in *Siegfried's* heart by describing *Fafner's* terrible form and powers. But *Siegfried's* courage is not weakened. On the contrary, with heroic impetuosity, he asks to be at once confronted with *Fafner*. *Mime*, well knowing that *Fafner* will soon awaken and issue from his cave to meet *Siegfried* in mortal combat, lingers on in the hope that both may fall, until the young Wälsung drives him away.

Now begins the most beautiful lyric episode ever conceived. *Siegfried* reclines under a linden tree, and looks up through the branches. The rustling of the

trees is heard. Over the tremulous whispers of the orchestra—known from concert programs as the Waldweben (forest-weaving)—rises a lovely variant of the Wälsung Motive. *Siegfried* is asking himself how his mother may have looked, and this variant of the theme which was first heard in "The Valkyr," when *Sieglinde* told *Siegmund* that her home was the home of woe, rises like a memory of her image. Serenely the sweet strains of the Love-Life Motive soothe his sad thoughts. The graceful outlines of the Freia Motive rise for a moment, and then *Siegfried*, once more entranced by forest sounds, listens intently. Birds' voices greet him. A little feathery songster, whose notes mingle with the rustling leaves of the linden tree, especially charms him.

The forest voices—the humming of insects, the piping of the birds, the amorous quiver of the branches—quicken his half-defined aspirations. Can the little singer explain his longing? He listens, but cannot catch the meaning of the song. Perhaps, if he can imitate it, he may understand it. Springing to a stream hard by, he cuts a reed with his sword, and quickly fashions a pipe from it. He blows on it, but it sounds shrill. He listens again to the bird. He may not be able to imitate its song on the reed, but on his silver horn he can wind a woodland tune. Putting the horn to his lips he makes the forest ring with its notes.*

The notes of the horn have awakened *Fafner*, who now crawls toward *Siegfried*. Perhaps the less said about the combat between *Siegfried* and *Fafner* the better. This scene, which seems very spirited in the libretto,

* The Motives are the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless and the Siegfried Motive.

is ridiculous on the stage. To make it effective it should be carried out very far back—best of all out of sight—so that the magnificent music will not be marred by the sight of an impossible monstrum. The music is highly dramatic. The exultant force of the Motive of Siegmund the Fearless, which rings out like a shout of barbaric joy as *Siegfried* rushes upon *Fafner*, the crashing chord as the serpent roars when *Siegfried* buries the sword in its heart, the rearing, plunging music as the monster rears and plunges with agony—these are some of the most graphic features of the score.*

Siegfried raises his fingers to his lips and licks the blood from them. Immediately after the blood has touched his lips he seems to understand the bird, which has again begun its song, while the forest voices once more weave their tremulous melody. The bird tells *Siegfried* of the ring and helmet and of the other treasures in *Fafner's* cave, and *Siegfried* enters it in quest of them. With his disappearance the forest-weaving suddenly changes to the harsh, scolding notes heard in the beginning of the Nibelheim scene in the "The Rhinegold." *Mime* slinks in and timidly looks about him to make sure of *Fafner's* death. At the same time *Alberich* issues forth from the crevice in which he was concealed. This scene, in which the two Nibelungs berate each other after the liveliest fashion, is episodical, being hardly necessary to the development of the plot. It is, however, capitally treated, and its humor affords a striking contrast to the preceding scenes.**

As *Siegfried* comes out of the cave and brings the ring

* Observe the significant occurrence of the Motives of the Curse, Siegfried and the Nibelungs' Malevolence in the accompaniment to *Fafner's* dying words.

** The Nibelung and Tarnhelmet Motives are prominent.

and helmet from darkness to the light of day there are heard the Ring Motive, the Motive of the Rhinedaughters' Shout of Triumph and the Rhinegold Motive.

These, familiar from "Rhinegold," will be found quoted in the analysis of it. The forest-weaving again begins, and the bird bids the young Wälsung beware of *Mime*. The dwarf now approaches *Siegfried* with repulsive sycophancy. But under a smiling face lurks a plotting heart. *Siegfried* is enabled through the supernatural gifts with which he has become endowed to fathom the purpose of the dwarf, who, unconsciously discloses his scheme to poison *Siegfried*. The young Wälsung slays *Mime*, who, as he dies, hears *Alberich's* mocking laugh. *Alberich* has felled another victim. Though the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless predominates at this point, we also hear the Nibelung Motive and the Motive of the Curse—indicating the Nibelung's evil intent toward *Siegfried*.

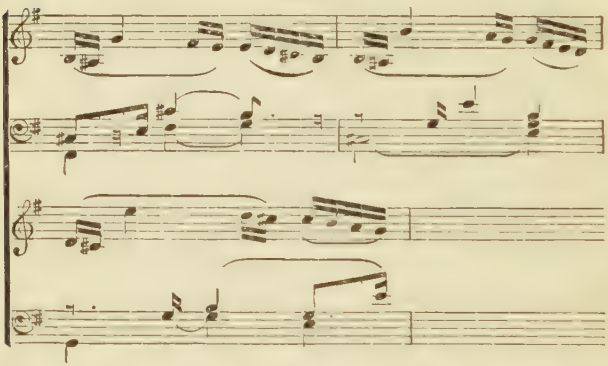
Siegfried again reclines under the linden. His soul is tremulous with an undefined longing. As he gazes in almost painful emotion up to the branches and asks if the bird can tell him where he can find a friend, his being seems stirred by awakening passion.

The music quickens with an impetuous phrase (p. 228, l. 3), which seems to define the first joyous thrill of passion in the youthful hero. It is the Motive of LOVE'S JOY (51).

It is interrupted (p. 229, l. 2,) by a beautiful variant of the Motive of Love-life (No. 47), which continues until above the Forest-weaving the bird again thrills him with its tale of the glorious maid who has so long slumbered upon the fire-guarded rock. With the Motive of Love's Joy coursing through the orchestra, *Siegfried*, bids the feathery songster continue, and, finally, to guide him to *Brünnhilde*. In answer, the bird flutters from the linden branch, hovers

over *Siegfried*, and hesitatingly flies before him until it takes a definite course toward the background. *Siegfried*

51



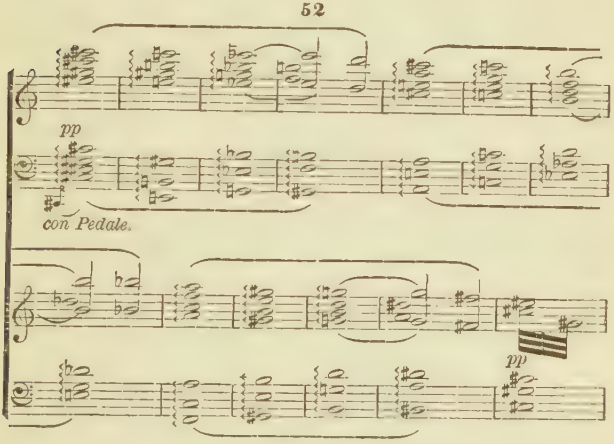
follows the little singer, the Motive of Love's Joy, succeeded by that of Siegfried the Fearless, bringing the act to a close.

Act III.

The third act opens with a stormy introduction, in which the Motive of the Ride of the Valkyrs accompanies the Motive of the Gods' Stress (p. 239, l. 4, bar 3), the Compact and the Erda Motives (p. 239, l. 6, bar 3). The introduction reaches its climax with the Motive of the Dusk of the Gods (No. 52 *infra*).

Then to the sombre, questioning phrase of the Motive of Fate, the action begins to disclose the significance of this *vorspiel*. A wild region at the foot of a rocky mountain is seen. It is night. A fierce storm rages. In dire stress and fearful that through *Siegfried* and *Brünnhilde* the

rulership of the world may pass from the gods to the human race, *Wotan* summons *Erda* from her subterranean dwelling. But *Erda* has no counsel for the storm-driven, conscience-stricken god. The chief motives which accompany the scene up to this point are familiar from earlier portions of the Cycle. They are, besides the Erda and Compact Motives, the Motive of the Dusk of the Gods (p. 244, l. 3,

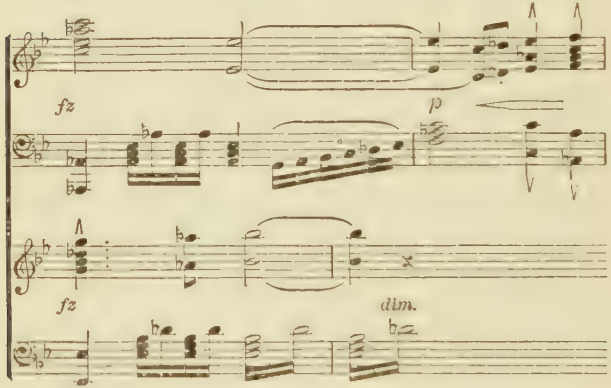


bar 7), the Walhalla and Fate Motives, and those of the Renunciation, and Brünnhilde's Pleading.

The scene reaches its climax in *Wotan's* noble renunciation of the empire of the world. Weary of strife, weary of struggling against the decree of fate he renounces his sway. Let the era of human love supplant this dynasty, sweeping away the gods and the Nibelungs in its mighty current. For mournful dignity this episode is unrivalled. It is the last defiance of all-conquering fate by the ruler of a mighty

race. After a powerful struggle against irresistible forces, *Wotan* comprehends that the twilight of the gods will be the dawn of a more glorious epoch. A phrase of great dignity gives force to *Wotan's* utterances. It is the MOTIVE OF THE WORLD'S HERITAGE:

53



Siegfried enters, guided to the spot by the bird; *Wotan* checks his progress with the same spear which shivered *Siegmund's* sword. *Siegfried* must fight his way to *Brünnhilde*. With a mighty blow the young Wälsung shatters the spear and *Wotan* disappears 'mid the crash of the Motive of Compact—for the spear with which it was the chief god's duty to enforce compacts is shattered. Meanwhile the gleam of fire has become noticeable. Fiery clouds float down from the mountain. *Siegfried* stands at the rim of the magic circle. Winding his horn he plunges into the seething flames. Around the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless and the Siegfried Motive flash the Magic

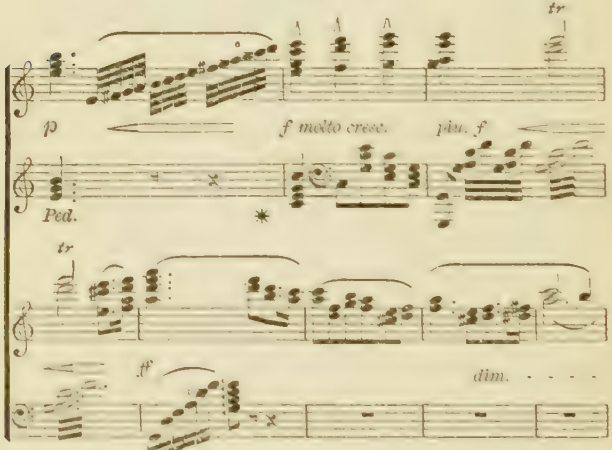
Fire and Loge Motives. On p. 282, l. 3, bar 1 the Rhine-daughters' Shout of Triumph (No. 5) will be found combined with the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless and—beginning p. 284, l. 5, bar 3—there is an interesting sequence of the Siegfried Motive and the Rhine-daughters' Shout of Triumph combined with the Slumber Motive. *Siegfried* is seen ascending the heights.

The flames having flashed forth with dazzling brilliancy gradually pale before the red glow of dawn till a rosy mist envelopes the scene. When it rises, the Valkyr's Rock and *Brünnhilde* in deep slumber under the fir tree, as in the finale of "The Valkyr," are seen. *Siegfried* appears on the height in the background. As he gazes upon the scene there are heard the Fate and Slumber Motives and then the orchestra weaves a lovely variant of the Freia Motive (No. 12). This is followed by the softly caressing strains of the Fricka Motive (No. 10). *Fricka* sought to make *Wotan* faithful to her by bonds of love, and hence the Fricka Motive in this scene does not reflect her personality but rather the awakening of the love which is to thrill *Siegfried* when he has beheld *Brünnhilde's* features. As he sees *Brünnhilde's* charger slumbering in the grove we hear the Motive of the Valkyrs' Ride and, when his gaze is attracted by the sheen of *Brünnhilde's* armor, the theme of Wotan's Farewell (p. 62, *sup.*). Approaching the armed slumberer under the fir tree *Siegfried* raises the shield and discloses the figure of the sleeper, the face being almost hidden by the helmet.

He carefully loosens the helmet. As he takes it off *Brünnhilde's* face is disclosed and her long curls flow down over her bosom. *Siegfried* gazes upon her enraptured. Drawing his sword he cuts through the rings of mail on both sides, gently lifts off the corselet and greaves, and

Brünnhilde, in soft female drapery, lies before him. He starts back in wonder. Notes of impassioned import—the Motive of Love's Joy—express the feelings that well up from his heart as for the first time he beholds a woman. The fearless hero is infused with fear by a slumbering woman. The Walsung Motive, afterwards beautifully varied with the Motive of Love's Joy, accompanies his

54



utterances, the climax of his emotional excitement being expressed in a majestic *crescendo* of the Freia Motive (p. 294, l. 4, bar 4, *et seq.*). A sudden feeling of awe gives him at least the outward appearance of calmness. With the Motive of Fate he faces his destiny; and then, while the Freia Motive rises like a vision of loveliness, he sinks over *Brunnhilde*, and with closed eyes presses his lips to hers.

Brunnhilde awakens. *Siegfried* starts up. She rises

and with noble gesture greets in majestic accents her return to the sight of earth. Strains of loftier eloquence than those of her greeting have never been composed. *Brunnhilde* rises from her magic slumbers in the majesty of womanhood (No. 54 *supra*).

With the Motive of Fate she asks who is the hero who has awakened her. The superb Siegfried Motive gives back the proud answer. In rapturous phrases they greet one another. It is the MOTIVE OF LOVE'S GREETING (No. 55 *infra*,) which unites their voices in impassioned accents until, as if this motive no longer sufficed to express their ecstacy, it is followed by the MOTIVE OF LOVE'S PASSION (No. 56 *infra*,) which, with the Siegfried Motive, rises and falls with the heaving of *Brunnhilde's* bosom.

These motives course impetuously through this scene. Here and there we have others recalling former portions of the cycle—the Walsung motive (p. 303, l. 2, bar 7), when *Brunnhilde* refers to *Siegfried's* mother, *Sieglinde*; the Motive of Brünnhilde's Pleading when she tells him of her defiance of *Wotan's* behest (p. 305, l. 2, bar 3); a variant of the Walhalla Motive when she speaks of herself in Valhall (p. 313, l. 3, bar 7); and the Motive of the World's Heritage with which *Siegfried* claims her, this last leading over to a forceful climax of the Motive of Brünnhilde's Pleading, which is followed by a lovely, tranquil episode introduced by the MOTIVE OF LOVE'S PEACE, which is succeeded (p. 319, l. 3, bars 1–5) by a motive, ardent yet tender—the MOTIVE OF SIEGFRIED THE PROTECTOR (Nos. 57 and 58 *infra*).

These motives accompany the action most expressively. *Brunnhilde* still hesitates to cast off forever the supernatural characteristics of the Valkyr and give herself up entirely to *Siegfried*. The young hero's growing ecstacy

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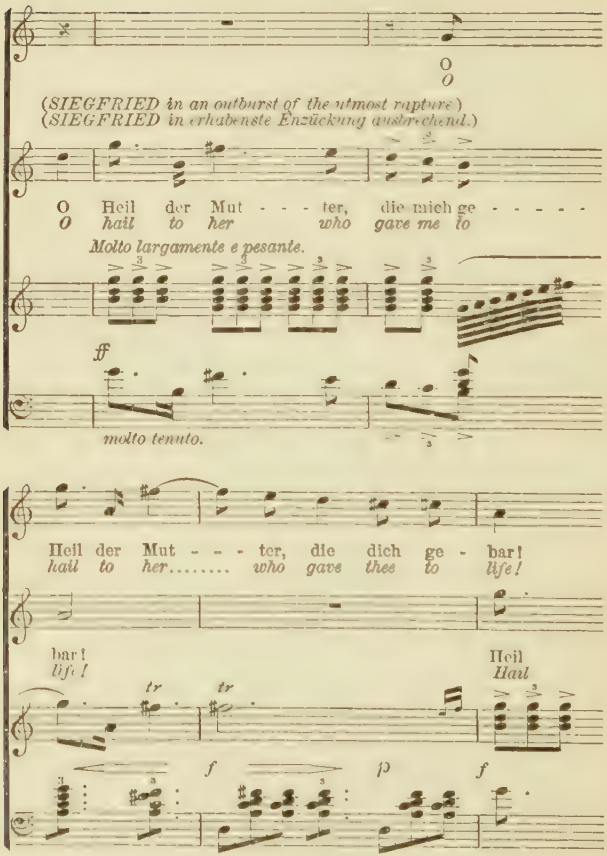
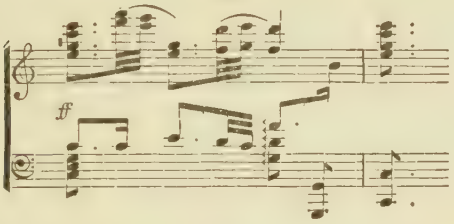

O
O
(SIEGFRIED in an outburst of the utmost rapture)
(SIEGFRIED in erhabenste Entzückung ausbrechend.)
O Heil der Mut - - - ter, die mich ge - - - - -
O hail to her who gave me to
Molto largamente e pesante.
ff
molto tenuto.
Heil der Mut - - - ter, die dich ge - bar!
hail to her..... who gave thee to life!
bar!
life!
Heil
Hail
tr
tr
f
p
f

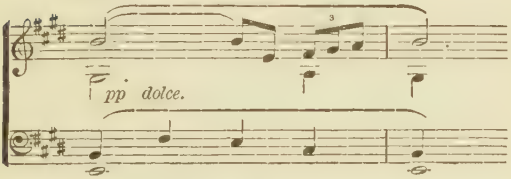
finds expression in the Motive of Love's Joy. At last it awakens a responsive note of purely human passion in *Brünnhilde* and, answering the proud Siegfried Motive with

56



57

Molto tranquillo e moderato.



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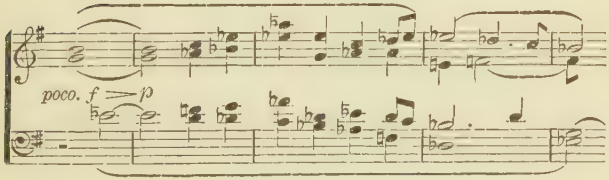


the jubilant Shout of the Valkyrs and the ecstatic measures of Love's Passion, she proclaims herself his. Then, as river and sea meet in turbulent billows, so meet the emo-

tions of *Brünnhilde* and *Siegfried* in a surging flood of music. As she clasps him to her bosom his frame quivers with a joyous thrill and in a glorious burst of impassioned melody love rises to its rapturous climax. *Siegfried* and *Brünnhilde* are united! From the Valkyr, fearful of surrendering her virgin purity lest with it she should loose her goddess-like power, *Brunnhilde* has changed to a woman, swayed by woman's emotions and passions and with that complete faith in her lover which is perhaps the most sublime attribute of woman's love.

SIEGFRIED'S DEATH.

"THE DUSK OF THE GODS."

The "Dusk of the Gods" is in a prologue and three acts.

THE PROLOGUE.

The first scene of the prologue is a weirdly effective conference of the three gray sisters of fate—the *Norns* who wind the skein of life. They have met on the Valkyrs' rock and their words forebode the end of the Gods. At last the skein they have been winding breaks—the final catastrophe is impending. The chief Motives heard in this scene are the Erda and Fate Motives, with which latter it passes over to the second scene—*Siegfried's* farewell to *Brünnhilde*.

An orchestral interlude depicts the transition from the unearthly gloom of the *Norn* scene to break of day, the climax being reached in a majestic burst of music as *Siegfried* and *Brünnhilde*, he in full armor, she leading her steed by the bridle, issue forth from the rocky cavern in the background. This climax owes its sublime eloquence to three motives—that of the Ride of the Valkyrs and two new motives, the one as lovely as the other is heroic, the former being the BRÜNNHILDE MOTIVE (59), the latter the MOTIVE OF SIEGFRIED THE HERO (60):

59

60

The Brünnhilde Motive seems to express the strain of pure, tender womanhood in the nature of the former Valkyr. This motive proclaims womanly ecstacy over wholly requited love, as distinguished from the barbaric frenzy of the wild horse-woman of the air, as *Brünnhilde* appeared to us in the first scene of the second act of "The Valkyr." The motive of Siegfried the Hero is clearly developed from the motive of Siegfried the Fearless. The fearless youth has developed into the heroic man. Its outburst from the orchestra in the dawn scene almost simultaneously with the first full effulgence of the day and the forthcoming of *Siegfried* and *Brunnhilde* from the cavern recall the psalmist's apostrophe of the sun:

Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber.

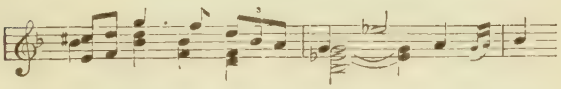
It represents the highest development of manhood. It is the most exaltedly heroic and at the same time, if the expression be allowable, the most muscular motive of the Cycle.

In this scene *Brunnhilde* and *Siegfried* plight their troth, and *Siegfried* having given to *Brunnhilde* the fatal ring and having received from her the steed Grane, which once bore her in her wild course through the storm clouds, bids her farewell and sets forth in quest of further adventure. This scene is one of Wagner's most beautiful creations. In addition to the two new motives already quoted there occurs a third—the MOTIVE OF BRÜNNHILDE'S LOVE.

When a woman of a strong, deep nature once gives her-

self up to love her passion is as strong and deep as her nature. It is not the surface-heat passion that finds expression in the French drama and the Italian opera to which Wagner has given vent in the music of this scene. It is love rising from the depths of an heroic woman's soul. The grandeur of her ideal of *Siegfried*, her thoughts of him as a hero winning fame, her pride in his prowess, her love for one whom she deems the bravest among men, find magnificent expression in the MOTIVE OF BRÜNNHILDE'S LOVE:

61

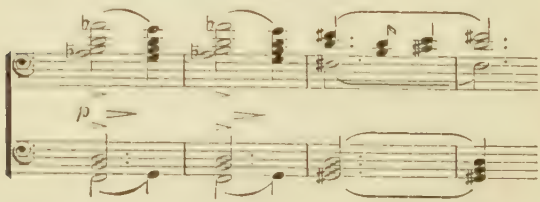


On p. 25, l. 2, bar. 2, occurs a contracted form of the Motive of Siegfried the Hero which is effectively used throughout the scene, especially in those portions where, after Brünnhilde has given Grane into his charge, it is heard in combination with the Motive of the Ride (p. 31, l. 4, bar 3, and p. 33, l. 3, bar 2). On the page last quoted this combination of motives is succeeded by a sturdy theme —a bar from Siegfried's wander-song in the first act of "Siegfried," which forms the basis of the impassioned phrases with which *Siegfried* and *Brünnhilde* bid one another farewell (p. 36, l. 1, beginning at bar 2). *Siegfried* disappears with the steed behind the rocks and *Brünnhilde* stands upon the cliff looking down the valley after him; his horn is heard from below and *Brünnhilde* with rapturous gesture waves him her farewell. The orchestra accompanies the action with the Brünnhilde Motive, the Motive of Siegfried the Fearless, and finally with the theme of the love-duet with which "Siegfried" closed.

The curtain then falls and between the prologue and the first act we have an orchestral interlude descriptive of *Siegfried's* voyage down the Rhine to the castle of the Gibichungs where dwell *Gunther*, his sister *Gutrune*, and their half-brother *Hagen*, the son of *Alberich*. Through *Hagen* the curse hurled by *Alberich* in the "Rhinegold" at all into whose possession the ring shall come, is worked out to the end of its fell purpose—*Siegfried* is betrayed and destroyed and the rule of the gods brought to an end by *Brünnhilde's* expiation.

In the interlude between the prologue and the first act we first hear the brilliant Motive of Siegfried the Fearless and then the gracefully flowing Motives of the Rhine, and of the Rhinedaughters' Shout of Triumph with the Motives of the Rhinegold and Ring. *Hagan's* malevolent plotting, of which we are so soon to learn in the first act, is foreshadowed by the sombre harmonies which suddenly pervade the music—the Motive of Renunciation (p. 44, l. 4) and a motive based on that of the Tarnhelmet and expressive of the NIBELUNGS' POWER for evil:

62



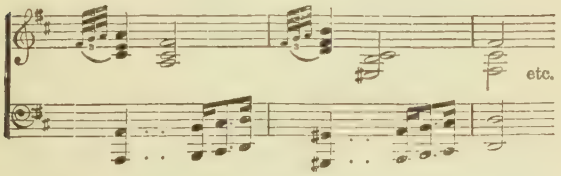
ACT I.

This act opens in the hall of the Gibichungs, on the Rhine. *Gunther*, *Hagen* (*Alberich's* son) and *Gutrune*, the sister

of *Gunther*, are plotting against *Siegfried*, of whose exploit in capturing the ring from *Fafner* and freeing *Brünnhilde*, *Hagen* knows. *Gunther* is disposed to be contented with what he has, but *Hagen* urges him to take a wife and procure a husband for *Gutrune*, suggesting that she give *Siegfried* a love-potion, which will excite him to love her and give up *Brünnhilde* to *Gunther*.

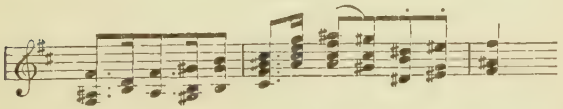
At the very beginning of this act the Hagen Motive is heard. Particularly noticeable in it are the first two sharp, decisive chords. They recur with frightful force in the third act when *Hagen* slays *Siegfried*. The HAGEN MOTIVE is as follows:

63



This is followed by the GIBICHUNG MOTIVE, the two motives being frequently heard in the opening scene:

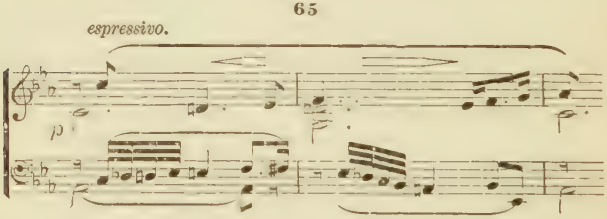
64



Motives prominent in earlier scenes and easily to be recognized occur when *Hagen* describes the beauty of *Brünnhilde*, and the powers of *Siegfried* and suggests the infamous trick by which *Siegfried* is to be induced to win her for *Gunther*—the Motives of the Ride of the Valkyrs, of the Wälsungs' Heroism (p. 49, l. 1, bar 4), of Siegfried the Fear-

less (p. 49, l. 3, bar 1) and of the Ring, Renunciation and Gold, followed appropriately by the motive of the Nibelungs' Power through which *Siegfried's* destruction is to be compassed (p. 51, l., 1, bar 2—l. 4, bar 1). Added to these is the MOTIVE OF THE LOVE POTION which is to cause Siegfried to forget *Brünnhilde*, and conceive a violent passion for *Gutrune*:

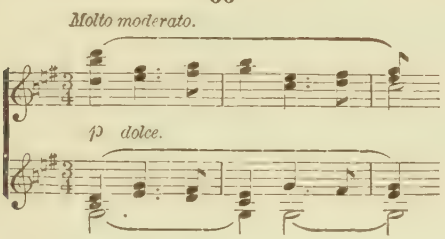
65



The notes of *Siegfried's* horn are heard in the distance. As *Hagen* looks down the river and describes to *Gunther* how, with an easy stroke, the hero forces the boat against the swift current, we hear an effective combination of the Motives of Siegfried the Fearless and of the Rhine-daughters' Shout of Triumph (p. 59, l. 1, bar 1); the Nibelung-son's boisterous greeting in answer to which *Siegfried* lays to with his boat is appropriately followed with tragic force by the Motive of the Curse. The Siegfried Motive imparts dignity to the meeting between the young hero and *Gunther*. When *Siegfried* asks *Hagen* how he recognized him although they had never met, the Motive of the Curse, prophetically significant, accompanies the query. At the hero's command to *Hagen* that he heedfully tend Grane the Brünnhilde Motive and the Motives of Brünnhilde's Love, and of the Ride of the Valkyrs are heard. After some parley between the men, *Gutrune*, who, at a gesture from

Hagen, had retired, re-enters bearing a drinking horn and approaching *Siegfried* bids him welcome in the GUTRUNE MOTIVE:

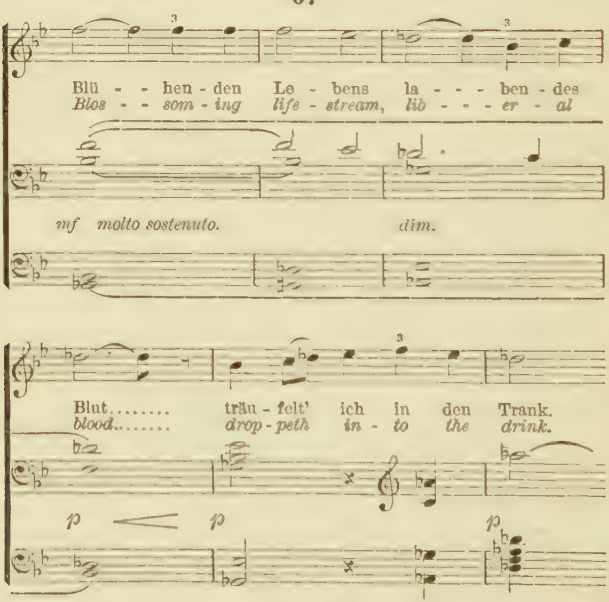
66



This is followed by the Motive of the Love Potion and then, after the orchestra has murmured memories of the love-scene in "Siegfried," the young hero drains the drinking horn to *Brünnhilde's* happiness. His manner suddenly changes. The Motive of the Love Potion becomes more animated. *Siegfried* regards *Gutrune* with growing admiration. He asks her of *Gunther* in marriage. The Love Potion, which he quaffed to *Brünnhilde*, has effaced all memory of her. This is made doubly apparent when *Gunther* asks in return for *Gutrune's* hand that *Siegfried*, disguised in the Tarnhelmet as *Gunther*, penetrate the fiery barrier and lead *Brünnhilde* as bride to him. *Siegfried* repeats mechanically, as if endeavoring to collect his thoughts, *Gunther's* references to the rock and fire, and even the mention of *Brünnhilde's* name awakens no responsive thrill in him. He offers to bring *Brünnhilde* to *Gunther* as bride and to unite himself with the Gibichung by the sacred compact of blood-brotherhood. Each with his sword draws blood from his arm which he allows to mingle with wine in a drinking-horn held by *Hagen;* each lays two

fingers upon the horn, and then, having pledged blood-brotherhood, drinks of the blood and wine. This ceremony is significantly introduced by the Motive of the Curse followed by the Motive of Compact (p. 75, l. 3, bar 5). Phrases of *Siegfried's* and *Gunther's* pledge are set to a new motive whose forceful simplicity effectively expresses the idea of troth. It is the MOTIVE OF THE VOW:

67



Abruptly following Siegfried's pledge:

Thus drink I thee troth,

are those two chords of the *Hagen* Motive which are heard

again in the third act when the Nibelung has slain *Siegfried*.

Gunther and *Siegfried* enter the latter's boat, cast off and begin their journey to the Valkyr Rock where *Siegfried* under the influence of the magic Love Potion is to forcibly seize his own bride and deliver her to *Gunther*. The latter it should perhaps be stated here, is not aware of the union which existed between *Brünnhilde* and *Siegfried*, *Hagen* having carefully concealed this from his half-brother who hence believes that he will receive the Valkyr in all her goddess-like virginity.

When *Siegfried* and *Gunther* have departed and *Gutrune*, having sighed her farewell after her lover, has retired, *Hagen* broods with wicked glee over the successful inauguration of his plot. During a brief orchestral interlude a drop curtain conceals the scene which, when the curtain again rises, has changed to the Valkyrs' Rock where sits *Brünnhilde*, lost in contemplation of the Ring, while the Motive of Siegfried the Protector (No. 58) is heard on the orchestra like a blissful memory of the love-scene in "Siegfried."

Her rapturous reminiscences are interrupted by the sounds of an approaching storm and from the dark cloud there issues one of the Valkyrs, *Waltraute* who comes to ask of *Brünnhilde* that she cast back the ring into the Rhine and thus lift the curse from the race of gods. But Brünnhilde refuses:

More than Walhalla's welfare
More than the good of the gods,
The ring I guard.
From love I part not in life,
No gods can tear us asunder,
Soon shall Walhalla's walls
Be dust for the winds!

It is dusk. The magic fire rising from the valley throws a glow over the landscape. The notes of *Siegfried's* horn are heard. *Brünnhilde* joyously prepares to meet him. Suddenly she sees a stranger leap through the flames. It is *Siegfried*, who through the Tarn-helmet (the motive of which, followed by the Gunther Motive dominates the first part of the scene) has assumed the guise of the Gibichung. In vain *Brünnhilde* seeks to defend herself with the might which the ring imparts. She is powerless against the intruder. As he tears the ring from her finger, the Motive of the Curse resounds with tragic import followed by trist echoes of the Motive of Siegfried the Protector and of the Brünnhilde Motive, the last being succeeded by the Tarnhelmet Motive expressive of the evil magic which has wrought this change in *Siegfried*. *Brünnhilde's* abject recognition of her impotence is accompanied by the restless, syncopated rhythm of the Nibelungs' Malevolence (No. 22), as she enters the cavern. Before *Siegfried* follows her he draws his sword Nothung (Needful) and exclaims:

> Now Nothung, witness thou, that chaste my wooing is;
> To keep my faith with my brother, separate me from his bride.

The music of this closing episode is forcefully graphic. It opens (*Più animato*, p. 127) with the abrupt chords of the Hagen Motive. These and the Motive of Compact accompany the Sword Motive when *Siegfried* draws Nothung (p. 127, l. 2, bars 2 and 3). Phrases of the Pledge of Blood-brotherhood followed by the Brünnhilde, Gutrune and Sword Motives accompany his words. The abrupt Hagen chords lead to the Motives of the Nibelungs' Power and Tarnhelmet which pass into the Brünnhilde Motive. This rises for a moment triumphantly over the sombre, threatening harmonies of malevolence and sorcery. But it ends abruptly; and the chords so forcefully expressive of Hagen's

vindictive power, with the Tarnhelmet Motive through which the thuds of the typical Nibelung rhythm resound, lead to the last crashing chord of this eventful act.

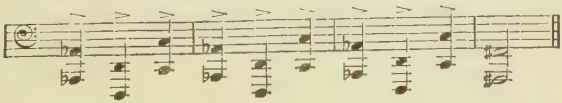
Act II.

The ominous Motive of the Nibelungs' Malevolence introduces the second act. The curtain rises upon the exterior of the hall of the Gibichungs. To the right is the open entrance to the hall; to the left the bank of the Rhine, from which rises a rocky ascent toward the background. It is night. *Hagen*, spear in hand and shield at side, leans in sleep against a pillar of the hall. Through the weird moonlight *Alberich* appears. He urges *Hagen* to murder *Siegfried* and to seize the ring from his finger. After hearing *Hagen's* oath that he will be faithful to the hate he has inherited, *Alberich* disappears. The weirdness of the surroundings, the monotony of *Hagen's* answers, uttered seemingly in sleep, as if, even when the Nibelung slumbers, his mind remained active, imbue this scene with awful mystery. New in this scene is the Murder Motive:

68

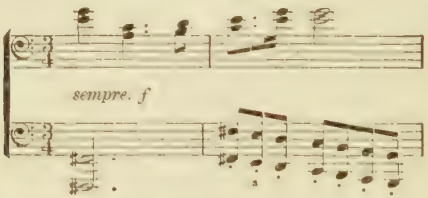
A charming orchestral interlude depicts the break of day. Its serene beauty is, however, broken in upon by the Motive of Hagen's Wicked Glee, which I quote, as it frequently occurs in the course of the succeeding events:

69



The Motive of Siegfried the Fearless accompanies *Siegfried*'s appearance. When *Gutrune* joins him and *Hagen*, and *Siegfried* relates how he won *Brunnhilde* for *Gunther* the Motive of the Tarnhelmet is frequently heard usually combined with some other Motive, f. i., with the Motive of Love's Joy at p. 144, l. 4, bar 1; with the Loge Motive (p. 145, l. 3, bar 2) and with the Motive of the Ride of the Valkyrs (p. 146, l. 1, bar 5). The appropriate use of these will readily be recognized from the context. *Siegfried* having led *Gutrune* into the hall, *Hagen* ascends a rocky height and loudly summons the vassals of Gibichung. During the ensuing bustling, noisy scene a variant of the Gutrune Motive (p. 151, l. 3, bar 2) is employed as a WEDDING SUMMONS:

70

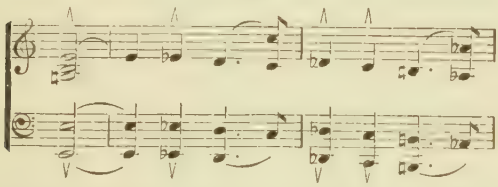


A boisterous chorus of rejoicing, barbaric in its sturdy force, greets *Gunther* as he leads *Brünnhilde* from the boat, to the open space before the hall from which latter *Siegfried*, *Gutrune* and her train of women have issued. Soon, however, the shadow of impending tragedy darkens the scene.

When *Gunther* greets *Gutrune* and *Siegfried* with the Motive of the Wedding Summons, *Brünnhilde* raising her eyes perceives *Siegfried* on whom her astonished gaze remains riveted. The Motive of Siegfried the Hero, the Sword

Motive and the Chords of the Hagen Motive emphasize with a tumultuous crash the dramatic significance of the situation. There is a sudden hush—*Brünnhilde* astounded and dumb, *Siegfried* unconscious of guilt quietly self-possessed, *Gunther*, *Gutrune* and the vassals silent with amazement—it is during this moment of tension that we hear the motive which expresses the thought uppermost in *Brünnhilde*, the thought which would find expression in a burst of frenzy were not her wrath held in check by her inability to quite grasp the meaning of the situation or to quite fathom the depth of the treachery of which she has been the victim. This is the MOTIVE OF VENGEANCE:

71



Tenderly the Gutrune Motive, or rather the version of it which formed the Wedding Summons, accompanies *Brünnhilde's*

Siegfried here? Gutrune?

and *Siegfried's* calm response:

Gunther's mild-eyed sister
Mate to me as thou to him.

But it is broken in upon by the now unbridled fury of the Motive of Vengeance (p. 181, l. 3, bar 1). Then, again dazed and still incredulous, *Brünnhilde* totters and is saved from falling only by *Siegfried* who supports her. Looking up to him as she did when his being thrilled with love of

her, she tenderly asks him, while the Brünnhilde Motive adds to the pathos of the scene, if he does not recognize her. Suddenly she sees the ring upon his finger. The crashing chords of the Ring Motive are followed by the Motive of the Curse. *Brünnhilde* now realizes the enormity of *Siegfried's* treachery—it must have been he, not *Gunther*, who overcame her. She hurls her accusation at *Siegfried* with versions of the Motive of Vengeance in which the wrath of injured womanhood seems to attain its most frenzied expression (p. 185, l. 3, bars 1 and 2; and p. 186, l. 1, bar 3 and l. 2, bar 1). When she invokes the gods to witness her humiliation the Walhalla Motive is heard. This is followed (p. 190, l. 2, bar 6) by the touchingly pathetic Motive of Brünnhilde's Pleading, which, however, soon gives way to the Motive of Vengeance when she calls upon the gods to give her vengeance commensurate with her wrong.

Brünnhilde accuses *Siegfried* of a threefold crime—of deserting her, of treachery toward *Gunther* in concealing from him that she had been his (*Siegfried's*) mate and of wronging *Gutrune* in wedding her when he had been already mated. *Brünnhilde*, knowing naught of the love-potion which has caused *Siegfried* to forget his night of love with her and to conceive a violent passion for *Gutrune*, thirsts for revenge upon him for his treachery. Her righteous wrath is intensified by jealousy of *Gunther's* sister for whom she believes herself to have been deserted. *Gunther* and *Gutrune* are also aroused, for *Hagen* carefully concealed from them all knowledge of the relations between *Siegfried* and *Brünnhilde*, and they believe that *Siegfried* exercised the nuptial privilege the night, when disguised as *Gunther*, he overcame *Brünnhilde*—that he has been unfaithful to *Gutrune* and has broken his vow of Blood-brotherhood with *Gunther*.

Siegfried takes oath that *Brünnhilde's* accusation is false; *Brünnhilde* swears that it is true. The taking of the oath is introduced by the Motive of Vengeance.

Siegfried swears upon *Hagen's* spear. Hence the fitness of the Murder Motive and of the sharp, decisive chords of the Hagen Motive. As *Brünnhilde* takes the oath the Valkyr music courses through the orchestra. All her wild Valkyr nature seems unloosed. *Siegfried's* oath allays *Gutrune's* suspicions. The tension of the scene is relaxed by the glad measures of the Wedding Summons. *Siegfried*, throwing his arm around *Gutrune*, draws her joyously with him into the hall whither they are followed by the vassals and women.

Brünnhilde, *Hagen* and *Gunther* remain behind. The Vengeance and Murder Motives and the Motive of the Vow dominate the ensuing scene. *Hagen* offers to be the executioner of *Brünnhilde's* and *Gunther's* vengeance. Music and action fairly seethe with excitement. In a trio through which fierce, revengeful passions surge, *Brünnhilde*, *Hagen* and *Gunther* swear vengeance upon *Siegfried*. From this outburst of wrath they turn to behold *Gutrune's* bridal procession issuing from the hall. The valley of the Rhine re-echoes with glad sounds—but it is the Murder Motive which brings the act to a close.

Act III.

This act plays on the banks of the Rhine, where stands *Siegfried*, baffled in his pursuit of the game. *Hagen* has arranged that *Siegfried* shall be slain at a hunt and brought home as if wounded by a boar. While *Siegfried* stands on the bank of the Rhine, the Rhine-daughters appear to him and promise to bring game in his way if he will give them the ring. He refuses and they disappear, leaving him to

his fate. For charming badinage this scene can be compared only with the opening scene in "The Rhinegold." The ripples of a lovely river do not exceed in grace the music with which Wagner has adorned this episode.

Distant hunting horns are heard. *Gunther*, *Hagen* and their attendants gradually assemble and encamp themselves. *Hagen* fills a drinking horn and hands it to *Siegfried* whom he persuades to relate the story of his life. This *Siegfried* does in a wonderfully picturesque, musical and dramatic story in which motives, often heard before, charm us anew.*

In the course of the narrative he refreshes himself by a draught from the drinking horn into which meanwhile *Hagen* has pressed the juice of an herb. Through this the effect of the Love Potion is so far counteracted that tender memories of *Brünnhilde* well up within him and he tells with artless enthusiasm how he won her. *Gunther* springs up aghast at this revelation. Now he knows that *Brünnhilde's* accusation was true.

Two ravens fly overhead. As *Siegfried* turns to look after them the Motive of the Curse resounds and *Hagen* plunges his spear into the young hero's back. *Gunther* and the vassals throw themselves upon *Hagen*. The Siegfried Motive, cut short with a crashing chord, the two murderous chords of the Hagen Motive forming the bass—and *Siegfried*, who with a last effort has heaved his shield aloft to hurl it at *Hagen*, lets it fall and, collapsing, drops upon it. So overpowered are the witnesses by the suddenness and enormity of the crime that after a few disjointed exclamations, they gather, bowed with grief, around *Siegfried*. *Hagen* with stony indifference turns away and disappears over the height.

* Nibelung, Sword, Dragon, Forest-Weaving, Tarnhelmet, Brünnhilde's Love, Brünnhilde, Magic Fire and Brunnhilde's Greeting.

With the fall of the last scion of the Wälsung race we hear a new motive, simple yet indescribably fraught with woe—the DEATH MOTIVE (p. 296, l. 4, bars 1 and 2).

Siegfried supported by two men rises to a sitting posture and with a strange rapture gleaming in his glance intones his death-song. It is an ecstatic greeting to *Brünnhilde*. "Brünnhilde!" he exclaims, "thy wakener comes to wake thee with his kiss." The ethereal harmonies of the Motive of Brünnhilde's Awakening, the Motive of Fate, the Siegfried Motive swelling into the Motive of Love's Greeting and dying away through the Motive of Love's Passion to *Siegfried's* last whispered accents—"Brünnhilde beckons to me"—in the Motive of Fate—and *Siegfried* sinks back in death.

Full of pathos though this episode be it but brings us to the threshold of a scene of such overwhelming power that it may without exaggeration be singled out as the supreme musical-dramatic effect in all that Wagner wrought and hence the supreme effect in all music. *Siegfried's* last ecstatic greeting to his Valkyr bride has made us realize the blackness of the treachery which tore the young hero and *Brünnhilde* asunder and led to his death; and now as we are bowed down with a grief too deep for utterance—like the grief with which a nation gathers at the grave of its noblest hero—Wagner voices for us in music of overwhelmingly tragic power feelings which are beyond expression in human speech. This is not a funeral march, as it is often absurdly called—it is the awful mystery of death itself expressed in music.

Motionless with grief the men gather around *Siegfried's* corpse. Night falls. The moon casts a pale, sad light over the scene. At the silent bidding of *Gunther* the vassals raise the body and bear it in solemn procession over the

rocky height. Meanwhile with majestic solemnity the orchestra voices the funeral oration of the "world's greatest hero." One by one, but tragically interrupted by the Motive of Death, we hear the motives which tell the story of the Wälsungs' futile struggle with destiny—the Wälsung Motive, the Motive of the Wälsung's Heroism, the Motive of Sympathy and the Love Motive, the Sword Motive, the Siegfried Motive and the Motive of Siegfried the Hero, around which the Death Motive swirls and crashes like a black, death-dealing, all-wrecking flood, forming an overwhelmingly powerful climax that dies away into the Brunnhilde Motive with which, as with a heart-broken sigh, the heroic dirge is brought to a close.

Meanwhile the scene has changed to the Hall of the Gibichungs as in the first act. *Gutrune* is listening through the night for some sound which may announce the return of the hunt.

Men and women bearing torches precede in great agitation the funeral train. *Hagen* grimly announces to *Gutrune* that *Siegfried* is dead. Wild with grief she overwhelms *Gunther* with violent accusations. He points to *Hagen* whose sole reply is to demand the ring as spoil. *Gunther* refuses. *Hagen* draws his sword and after a brief combat slays *Gunther*. The victorious Nibelung is about to snatch the ring from *Siegfried's* finger, when the corpse's hand suddenly raises itself threateningly, and all—even *Hagen*—fall back in consternation.

Brunnhilde advances solemnly from the back. While watching on the bank of the Rhine she has learned from the Rhine-daughters the treachery of which she and *Siegfried* have been the victims. Her mien is ennobled by a look of tragic exaltation. To her the grief of *Gutrune* is but the whining of a child. When the latter realizes that it was

Brünnhilde whom she caused *Siegfried* to forget through the love-potion, she falls fainting over *Gunther's* body. *Hagen* leaning on his spear is lost in gloomy brooding.

Brünnhilde turns solemnly to the men and women and bids them erect a funeral pyre. The orchestral harmonies shimmer with the Magic Fire Motive through which courses the Motive of the Ride of the Valkyrs. Then, her countenance transfigured by love, she gazes upon her dead hero and apostrophizes his memory in the Motive of Love's Greeting. From him she looks upward and in the Walhalla Motive and the Motive of Brünnhilde's Pleading passionately inveighs against the injustice of the gods. The Curse Motive is followed (p. 326, l. 2, bar 4) by a wonderfully beautiful combination of the Walhalla Motive and the Motive of the Gods' Stress at *Brünnhilde's* words :

Rest thee! Rest thee! O, God!

For, with the fading away of Walhalla, and the inauguration of the reign of human love in place of that of lust and greed—a change to be wrought by the approaching expiation of *Brünnhilde* for the crimes which began with the wresting of the Rhinegold from the Rhine-daughters—*Wotan's* stress will be at an end. *Brünnhilde* having told in the graceful, rippling Rhine music how she learned of *Hagen's* treachery through the Rhine-daughters, places upon her finger the ring. Then turning toward the pyre upon which Siegfried's body rests, she snatches a huge firebrand from one of the men. Flinging it upon the pyre, which kindles brightly, she hurries toward Grane. As the moment of her immolation approaches the Motive of Expiation begins to dominate the scene (p. 333, l. 1, bar 2).

It wings its flight higher and higher until it seems to have soared to the height of emotional exaltation. *Brünnhilde*

swings herself upon Grane's back, and with a mighty bound the steed bears his noble rider into the blazing pyre. Men and women in extreme terror crowd into the foreground. Suddenly the Rhine is seen to overflow, and borne on the flood the Rhine-daughters swim to the pyre and reclaim the ring. *Hagen* plunges madly after them into the flood and they draw him down with them. A deep glow illumines the heavens. It is the dusk of the gods. Walhalla is seen enveloped in flames. Once more the Walhalla Motive resounds majestically. But the Motive of Expiation breaks in upon it with overwhelming power. For the last time we hear the Siegfried Motive and then with the Motive of Expiation a new era—that of human love—rises in all its glory from the ruins of the empire of the gods.

TRISTAN AND ISOLDE.

"TRISTAN AND ISOLDE."

THE libretto of "Tristan and Isolde" is almost as thoroughly Wagner's creation as the score; for, while there was much legendary material for Wagner to work upon,* he was obliged to remodel it thoroughly before it became available for a modern drama. In the old stories there is much diffuseness, and the main episodes are obscured by numerous incidents of knightly adventure, *Tristan's* exploits and fate being quite similar, except for a change of environment, to those of *Siegfried*. The similarity extends even to a victorious encounter with a dragon, *Tristan*, however, conquering an Irish instead of a German monster, being thus in a measure a forerunner of St. Patrick. Wagner has shorn the legend of all unnecessary incidents and worked over the main episodes into a concise, vigorous, swiftly moving drama, admirably adapted for the musico-dramatic stage. He

* Chiefly the epic poem by Gottfried von Strassburg (about 1210).

shows keen dramatic insight in the manner in which he adapts the love potion of the legends to his purpose. In the legends the love of *Tristan* and *Isolde* is merely "chemical"—entirely the result of the philtre. Wagner however, presents them from the outset as enamored of one another, so that the potion simply quickens a passion already active.

The plot of "Tristan and Isolde" is briefly as follows: *Tristan*, having lost his parents in infancy, has been reared at the court of his uncle, *Marke*, king of Cornwall. He has slain *Morold*, an Irish knight, who had come to Cornwall to collect the tribute that country has been paying to Ireland. *Morold* was affianced to his cousin *Isolde*, daughter of the Irish king. *Tristan*, having been dangerously wounded in the combat, places himself, disguised as *Tantris*, under the care of *Morold's* affianced, *Isolde*, who comes of a race skilled in magic arts. She discovers his identity; but, although she is aware that she is harboring the slayer of her affianced, she spares him and carefully tends him, for she has conceived a deep passion for him. *Tristan* also becomes enamored of her, but both deem their love unrequited. Soon after *Tristan's* return to Cornwall he is dispatched to Ireland by *Marke*, that he may win *Isolde* as Queen for the Cornish king.

The music-drama opens on board the vessel in which *Tristan* bears *Isolde* to Cornwall. Deeming her love for *Tristan* unrequited she determines to end her sorrow by quaffing a death potion; and *Tristan*, feeling that the woman he loves is about to be wedded to another, readily consents to share it with her. But *Brangäne*, *Isolde's* companion, substi-

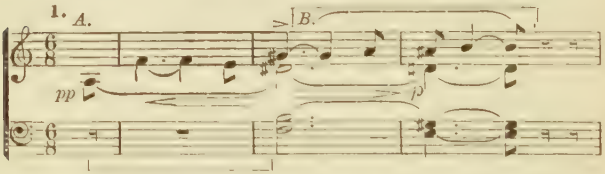
tutes a love potion for the death draught. This rouses their love to resistless passion. Not long after they reach Cornwall they are surprised in the castle garden by the King and his suite, and *Tristan* is severely wounded by *Melot*, one of *Marke's* knights. *Kurwenal*, *Tristan's* faithful retainer, bears him to his native place, Kareol. Hither *Isolde* follows him, arriving in time to fold him in her arms as he expires. She breathes her last over his corpse.

THE VORSPIEL.

The music of "Tristan and Isolde" is, above all, the music of passion. Love, excited by the arts of sorcery to the highest pitch of erotic rapture, seeks only to gratify itself, reckless of all consequences. The vague, sensuous yearning of the lovers, hesitating to express itself, is roused to an unrestrained avowal of their passion by the love potion; they abandon themselves to their ecstasy—and their fate is death. So much of the drama as precedes the drinking of the potion is, in a measure, narrative and explanatory; from the moment *Tristan* and *Isolde* share the goblet drama and music tell the story of love and death.

The magic philtre being therefore the excitant in this story of rapture and gloom, the *Vorspiel* opens most fittingly with a motive which seems to express the incipient effect of the potion upon *Tristan* and *Isolde*. It clearly can be divided into two parts (1 A

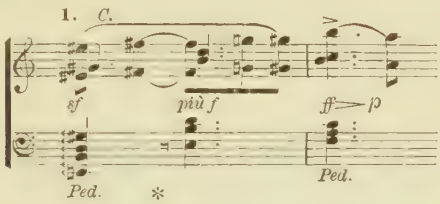
and B), one descending, the other ascending chromatically. The potion overcomes the restraining influence of duty in two beings and leaves them at the mercy of their passions. The first part, with its descending chromatics, is pervaded by a certain *triste* mood as if *Tristan* were still vaguely forewarned by his conscience of the impending tragedy. The second soars ecstatically upward. It is the woman yielding unquestioningly to the rapture of requited love. Indeed, the two phrases of this theme are so distinct that they may be considered two separate motives. Therefore, while the union of these parts may be called the Motive of the Love Potion, or, as Wolzogen calls it, of Yearning, it seems best to divide it into the TRISTAN and ISOLDE MOTIVES (1 A and B):



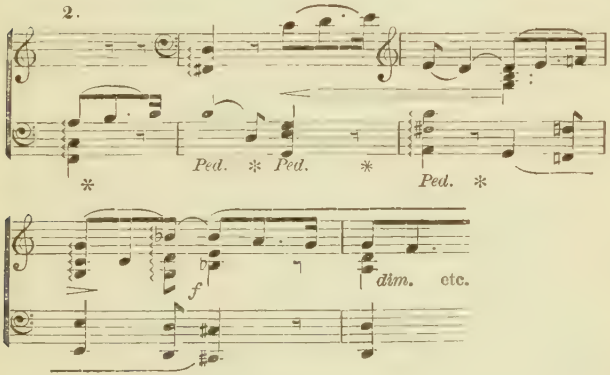
Thus they stand not only for the philtre, but also for the man and woman, whose moral sense it overpowers.

The two motives having been twice repeated, there is a *fermate*. Then the *Isolde* motive alone is heard, so that the attention of the hearer is fixed upon it. For in this tragedy, as in that of Eden, it is the woman who takes the first decisive step. After another *fermate*, the last two notes of the *Isolde* motive are twice

repeated, dying away to *pp*. Then a variation of the *Isolde* motive



leads with an impassioned upward sweep from *f* to *ff* into another version, full of sensuous yearning, and distinct enough to form a new motive, the MOTIVE OF THE LOVE GLANCE :



This occurs again and again in the course of the *Vorspiel*. Though readily recognized, it is sufficiently varied with each repetition never to allow the emotional

excitement to subside. In fact the *Vorspiel* gathers impetus as it proceeds, until, with an inversion of the Love Glance Motive, borne to a higher and higher level of exaltation by upward rushing runs of demi-semiquavers

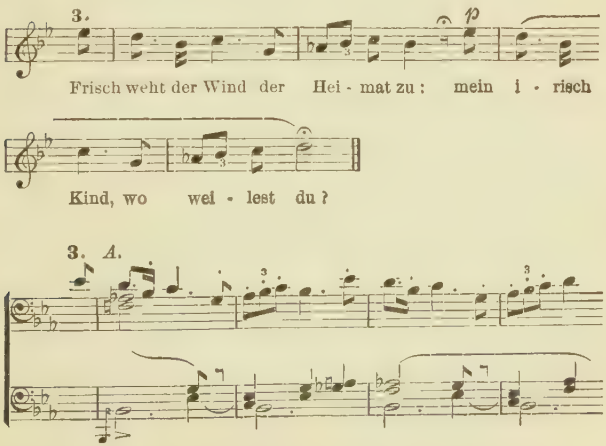
it reaches its climax in a paroxysm of erotic transport, to die away with repetitions of the Tristan, the Isolde and the Love Glance Motives.

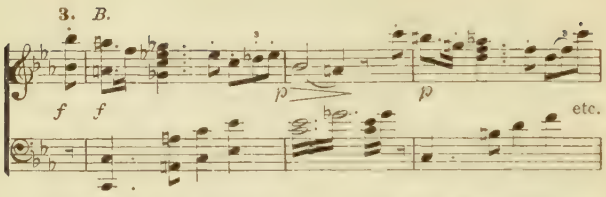
Act I.

The first act opens aboard the vessel in which *Tristan* is conveying *Isolde* to Cornwall.

The opening scene shows *Isolde* reclining on a couch, her face hid in soft pillows, in a tent-like apartment on the forward deck of a vessel. It is hung with rich tapestries, which hide the rest of the ship from view. *Brangäne* has partially drawn aside one of the hangings and is gazing out upon the sea. From above, as though from the rigging, is heard the voice of a young sailor singing a farewell song to his

"Irish maid." It has a wild charm and is a capital example of Wagner's skill in giving local coloring to his music. The words, "Frisch weht der Wind der Heimath zu" ("The wind blows freshly toward our home") are sung to a phrase which occurs frequently in the course of this scene. It represents most graphically the heaving of the sea and may be appropriately termed the Ocean Motive. It undulates gracefully through *Brangäne's* reply to *Isolde's* question as to the vessel's course, surges wildly around *Isolde's* outburst of impotent anger when she learns that Cornwall's shore is not far distant, and breaks itself in savage fury against her despairing wrath as she invokes the elements to destroy the ship and all upon it. OCEAN MOTIVE:



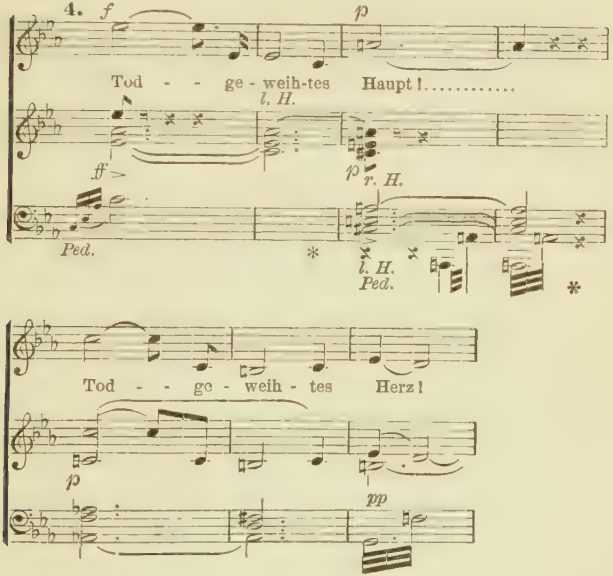


That it is her hopeless passion for *Tristan* which has prostrated *Isolde* appears in the Motive of the Love Glance, which accompanies her first exclamation as she starts up excitedly. During her invocation of the elements the Isolde Motive is also heard, no longer, however, expressive of rapturous love, but rather of love turned to fierce hatred (p. 9, l. 2). When *Brangäne* seeks to soothe her and inquires the cause of her grief it is heard again with some of its original beauty restored, and the Motive of the Love Glance is also aptly introduced (p. 12, l. 1, b. 3).

Isolde calls upon *Brangäne* to throw aside the hangings, that she may have air. *Brangäne* obeys. The deck of the ship and, beyond it, the ocean are disclosed. Around the mainmast are sailors busily splicing ropes. Beyond them, on the after deck, are knights and esquires. A little aside from them stands *Tristan*, gazing out upon the sea. At his feet reclines *Kurwenal*, his esquire. The young sailor's voice is again heard.

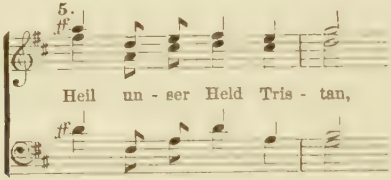
As *Isolde* beholds *Tristan*, her anger at the thought that he whom she loves should be bearing her as bride to another vents itself in a wrathful phrase,

in which she invokes death upon him. This phrase is the MOTIVE OF DEATH:



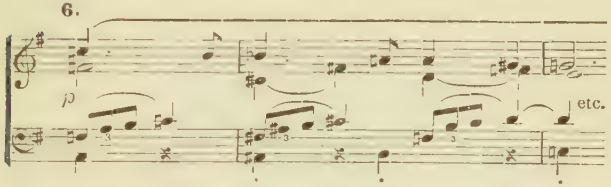
The Motive of the Love Glance is heard as *Isolde* asks *Brangäne* in what estimation she holds *Tristan*, and is developed into a triumphant strain as *Brangäne* sings his praises. *Isolde* bids *Brangäne* command *Tristan* to come into her presence. This command is given with the Motive of Death, for it is their mutual death *Isolde* wishes to compass. As *Brangäne* departs

a graceful variation of the Ocean Motive is heard, the bass marking the rhythmic motions of the sailors at the sheets (p. 17, l. 2, b. 3 *et seq.*). In answer to *Brangäne*, *Tristan* refuses to leave the helm. *Brangäne* repeats *Isolde's* command. *Kurwenal* answers in deft measures in praise of *Tristan*. Knights, esquires and sailors repeat the refrain, the boisterous measures—"Hail to our brave *Tristan!*" form the TRISTAN CALL:



When *Brangäne* has returned to *Isolde*, the latter's wrath and grief at *Kurwenal's* taunts find vent in a narrative in which she tells *Brangäne* that once a wounded knight calling himself *Tantris* landed on Ireland's shore to seek her healing art. Into a niche in his sword she fitted a sword splinter she had found imbedded in the head of *Morold*, which had been sent to her in mockery after he had been slain in a combat with the Cornish foe. She brandished the sword over the knight, whom thus by his weapon she knew to be *Tristan*, her betrothed's slayer. But *Tristan's* glance fell upon her: under its spell she was powerless. She nursed him back to health, and he vowed eternal gratitude as he left her. The chief theme of this nar-

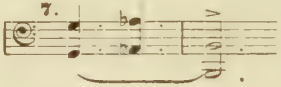
rative is obviously based upon the Tristan Motive (1 A):



Most beautiful is the transition of the phrase "His eyes in mine were gazing" (p. 29, l. 3, b. 1—l. 4, b. 5) to the Isolde (1 C) and Love Glance Motives. Another exquisite passage is that beginning: "Who silently his life had spared" (p. 35, l. 1). This is followed by the Tristan Call, *Isolde* seeming to compare sarcastically what she considers his betrayal of her with his fame as a hero; and with her outburst of wrath as she inveighs against his treachery in now bearing her as bride to *King Marke* the narrative reaches a superb climax. As *Brangäne* seeks to comfort *Isolde*, the latter, looking fixedly before her, confides, almost involuntarily, her love for *Tristan*.

"Where lives the man who would not love you?" asks *Brangäne*, then weirdly whispers of the love potion and takes a phial from a golden salver. The Motives of the Love Glance and of the Love Potion accompany her words and action. But *Isolde* seizes another phial, which she holds up triumphantly. It

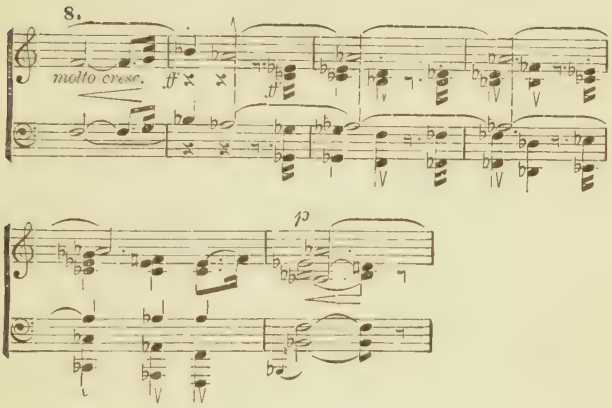
is the death potion. Here is heard an ominous phrase of three notes—the MOTIVE OF FATE:



A forceful orchestral climax, in which the demons of despairing wrath seem unloosed, is followed by the cries of the sailors greeting the sight of land. *Isolde* listens to them with growing terror. *Kurwenal* calls to her and *Brangäne* to prepare to soon go ashore. The brusque joy in the music accompanying his words forms an episode pleasantly contrasting with the excitement and mystery of the preceding scene. *Isolde* orders *Kurwenal* command *Tristan* to come into her presence; then bids *Brangäne* prepare the death potion. The Death Motive accompanies her final commands to *Kurwenal* and *Brangäne*, and the Fate Motive also drones threatfully through the weird measures.

Kurwenal announces *Tristan's* approach. *Isolde*, seeking to control her agitation, strides to the couch and, supporting herself by it, gazes fixedly at the entrance where *Tristan* remains standing. The motive which announces his appearance is full of tragic defiance, as if *Tristan* felt that he stood upon the thresh-

old of death, yet was ready to meet his fate without wincing:

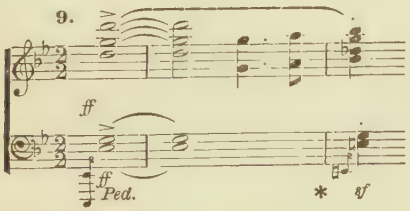


It alternates (beginning p. 56, l. 5, b. 5) effectively with the Fate Motive and is used most dramatically throughout the succeeding scene between *Tristan* and *Isolde*. When she upbraids him, as she refers to her tender care of him, the chief theme of her narrative (No. 6) is heard. Sombrely impressive is the passage when he bids *Isolde* slay him with the sword she once held over him. The shouts of the sailors announce the proximity of land. In a variant of her narrative theme (p. 69, l. 5, b. 1, &c.) *Isolde* mockingly anticipates *Tristan's* praise of her as he leads her into *King Marke's* presence. At the same time she

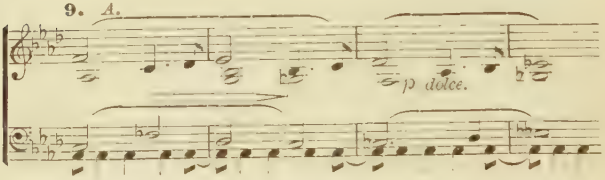
hands him the goblet which contains, as she thinks, the death potion and invites him to quaff it. Again the shouts of the sailors are heard, and *Tristan*, seizing the goblet, raises it to his lips with the ecstacy of one from whose soul a great sorrow is about to be lifted. When he has half emptied it, *Isolde* takes it from him and drains it. The vessel falls from her hand. *Tristan* and *Isolde* stand gazing upon one another. A strange tremor vibrates through their frames. Their eyes, set in the expectancy of death, now meet in rapturous glances. The Tristan and Isolde Motives tell of the emotions that are struggling for utterance. Then, with the impassioned variation heard in the *Vorspiel* (1 C) the Isolde Motive rises clear and bright and is followed by the Love Glance Motive. The effect is like that of the sudden breaking of a spell. *Isolde*, yielding to the rapture that quivers in her soul, sinks into *Tristan's* passionate embrace. The voices of the sailors break in upon their bliss, She starts from his arms. Then, as after a momentary calm a storm breaks with greater fury, their passion rages with demoniac energy. All the yearning and rapture of the motives heard in the *Vorspiel* mingle in the music of this scene, till *Brangäne* tears the lovers apart as the hangings are thrust aside, and knights, esquires and sailors are seen crowding the deck and jubilantly greeting *King Marke's* castle, which looks down from a rocky height. *Isolde* faints upon *Tristan's* breast, and amid the joyous shouts of the ship's folk, which almost drown the triumphant climax of the Isolde Motive, the act closes.

ACT II.

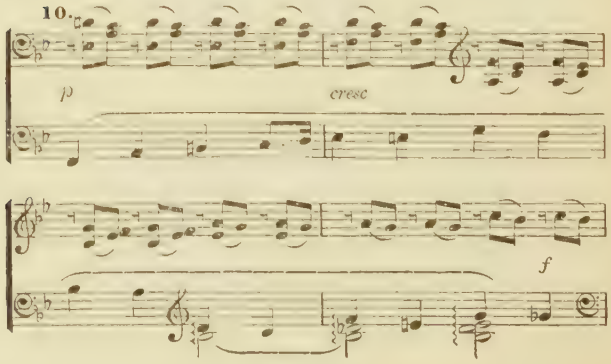
The introduction to the second act opens with a motive of peculiar significance. During the love scene the lovers inveigh against the day which jealously keeps them apart. They can meet only under the cover of darkness, and even then their joy is embittered by the thought that the blissful night will soon be succeeded by day. With them, therefore, the day stands for all that is inimical, night for all that is friendly. This simile is elaborated with considerable metaphysical subtlety, the lovers even reproaching the day with *Tristan's* willingness to lead *Isolde* to *King Marke*, *Tristan* charging that in the broad light of the jealous day his duty to win *Isolde* for his king stood forth so clearly as to overpower the passion for her which he had nurtured during the silent watches of the night. The phrase, therefore, which begins the act as with an agonized cry is the DAY MOTIVE:



Derived from it, but breathing a soft, sensuous melancholy, is the NIGHT MOTIVE :

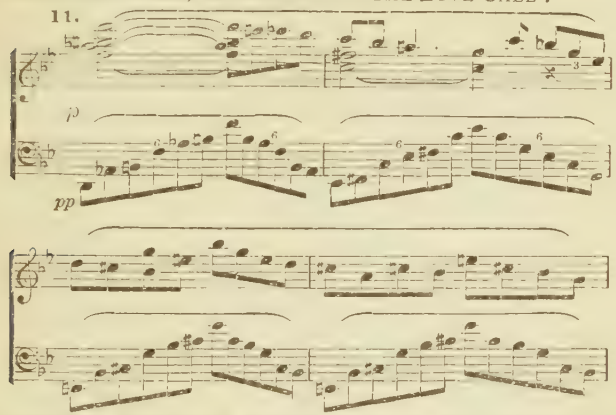


This latter does not, however, occur until later on in the act (p. 122, l. 3, b. 2–4) ; the Day Motive being followed by a phrase whose eager, restless measures graphically reflect the impatience with which *Isolde* awaits the coming of *Tristan*—the MOTIVE OF IMPATIENCE :



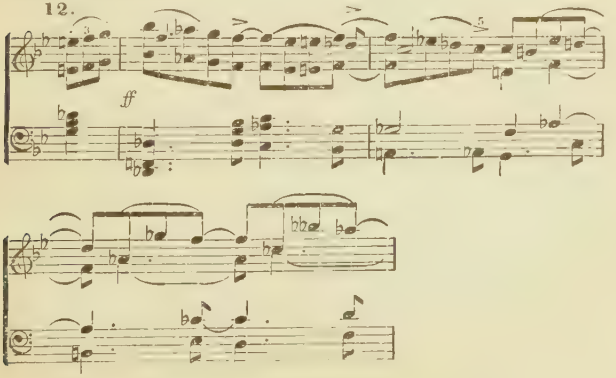
Over this there hovers (p. 85, l. 7, b. 1, &c.) a dulcet, seductive strain, the MOTIVE OF THE LOVE CALL :

11.



which is developed, after we have heard a variant of the Isolde Motive familiar from the first act (p. 86, l. 2, b. 3, &c.) into the rapturous measures of the MOTIVE OF ECSTASY :

12.

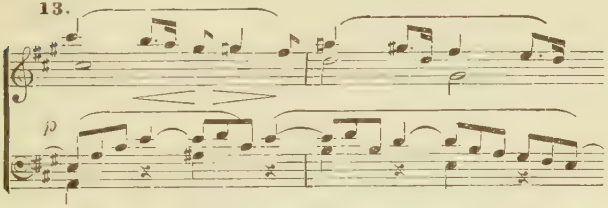


These phrases having been repeated in the following order—Love Call, Isolde Motive, Motive of Ecstasy and Love Call—the curtain rises.

The scene of this act is the garden into which *Isolde's* apartment opens. It is a lovely summer night. Upon the steps leading to *Isolde's* apartment stands *Brangäne* looking in the direction from which hunting horns are heard. Against the open door of *Isolde's* apartment is a burning torch. The first episode of the act is one of those exquisite tone paintings in the creation of which Wagner is supreme. The notes of the hunting horns become more distant. *Isolde* enters from her apartment into the garden. She asks *Brangäne* if she cannot now signal for *Tristan*. *Brangäne* answers that the hunt is still within hearing. *Isolde* chides her—is it not some lovely, prattling rill she hears? The music is deliciously idyllic—conjuring up a dream picture of a sylvan spring night bathed in liquescent moonlight. *Brangäne* warns *Isolde* against *Melot*; but *Isolde* laughs at her fears. In vain *Brangäne* entreats her mistress not to signal for *Tristan*. The seductive measures of the Love Call and of the Motive of Ecstasy tell throughout this scene of the yearning in *Isolde's* breast. When *Brangäne* informs *Isolde* that she substituted the love potion for the death draught, *Isolde* scorns the suggestion that her guilty love for *Tristan* is the result of her quaffing the potion. This simply intensified the passion already in her breast. She proclaims this in the rapturous phrases of the Isolde Motive (1 B); and then, when she declares her fate to be in the hands

of the goddess of love, there are heard the tender accents of the LOVE MOTIVE :

13.

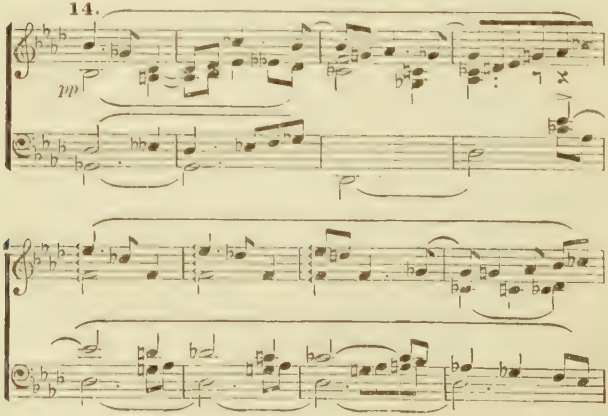


In vain *Brangäne* warns once more against treachery. The Love Motive rises with ever increasing passion until *Isolde's* emotional exaltation finds expression in the Motive of Ecstacy as she bids *Brangäne* hie to the lookout and proclaims that she will give *Tristan* the signal by extinguishing the torch though in doing so she were to extinguish the light of her life itself. The Motive of the Love Call ringing out triumphantly accompanies her act, and dies away into the Motive of Impatience as she gazes down a bosky avenue through which she seems to expect *Tristan* to come to her. Then the Motive of Ecstasy and *Isolde's* rapturous gesture tell that she has discerned her lover ; and as the Motive of Ecstasy reaches a fiercely impassioned climax *Tristan* and *Isolde* rush into each other's arms. The music fairly seethes with passion as the lovers greet one another, the Love Motive and the Motive of Ecstasy vying in the excitement of this rapturous meeting. Then begins the exchange of phrases in which the lovers pour forth their love for one another. This is the scene dominated by the

Motive of the Day, which, however, as the day sinks into the soft night, is softened (p. 122, l. 3, b. 2) into the Night Motive, which soothes the senses with its ravishing caress. This motive introduces and breathes through the throbbing rhythm and rapturous harmonies of the duet, "Oh sink upon us, Night of Love," and there is nothing in the realms of music or poetry to compare with these caressing, pulsating phrases in suggestiveness unless it be Swinburne's "In the Orchard."

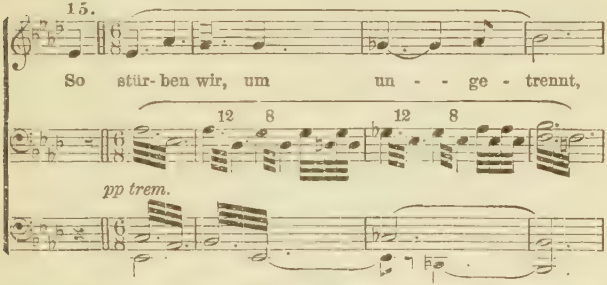
The duet is broken in upon by *Brangäne's* voice warning the lovers that night will soon be over. The arpeggios accompanying her warning are like the first gray streaks of dawn. But the lovers heed her not. In a smooth, soft melody—the MOTIVE OF LOVE'S PEACE—whose sensuous grace is simply entrancing, they whisper their love:

14.



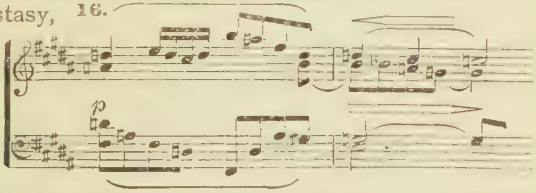
Could they but die an ecstatic love death while night still envelops them! Over an amorously quivering accompaniment there then rises the MOTIVE OF THE LOVE DEATH:

15.

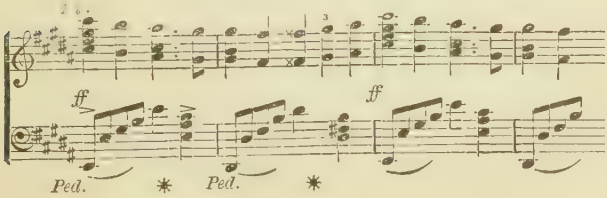


Brangäne calls again. But they love on, defying the approach of day, till their passion is apotheosized in a rapturous mordent, which soars into the Motive of Ecstasy,

16.



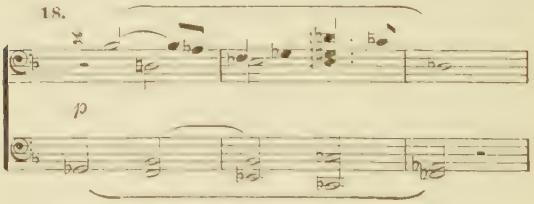
the music throbbing and surging until, in an expanded form of the Ecstasy Motive,



it reaches its climax in an uncontrollable outburst of transport.

A cry from *Brangäne*, *Kurwenal* rushing upon the scene calling to *Tristan* to save himself—and the lovers' ravishing dream is ended. Surrounded by the *King* and his suite, with the treacherous *Melot*, they gradually awaken to the terror of their situation. Almost automatically *Isolde* hides her head among the flowers, and *Tristan* spreads out his cloak to conceal her from view, while phrases reminiscent of the love scene rise like mournful memories.

Two new phrases occur in the following scene—the MARKE MOTIVE :



and the MOTIVE OF MARKE'S GRIEF :

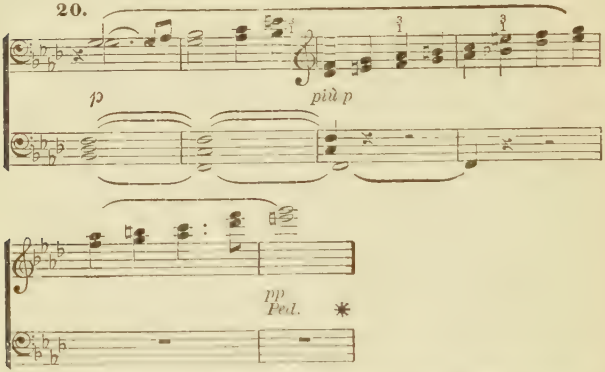
It seems inexplicable, even in view of *Tristan's* former services to the *King*, that *Marke*, instead of drawing his sword and slaying the knight who betrayed his honor, should indulge in a philosophical inquiry concerning the cause and nature of *Tristan's*

guilt. This is unquestionably an error from a dramatic point of view. We cannot sympathize with *Marke*, we cannot honor him for his forbearance. From the standpoint of manhood he is a garrulous professor of moral philosophy when he should be a swift avenger of his honor. Indeed it seems as if, had polygamy prevailed in ancient Cornwall, *Marke* might, on the principle of "turning the other cheek," have offered *Tristan* a further selection from among his wives. Theoretically such a character may be very beautiful and Christian-like, but dramatically it is weak and tedious—too good to be true. It is a relief when, *Marke* having finished his lecture, *Tristan* turns to *Isolde* and in beautifully pathetic accents asks if she will follow him to the country of his birth. The same mournful beauty pervades her reply that his home shall be hers. *Melot*, who seems deputed by Wagner to do what *Marke* should have done, draws his sword. *Tristan* bares his blade and rushes upon him, but in despair allows his sword to fall and receives *Melot's* thrust. *Isolde* throws herself upon her wounded lover's breast.

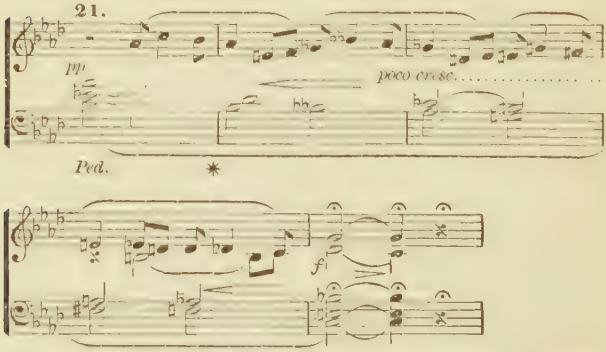
ACT III.

The introduction to this act opens with a variation of the Isolde Motive, sadly prophetic of the desolation which broods over the scene to be disclosed when the curtain rises. On its third repetition it is continued in a long drawn out ascending phrase, which seems to represent musically the broad waste

of ocean upon which *Tristan's* castle looks down from its craggy height.



It is broken in upon by the MOTIVE OF ANGUISH:

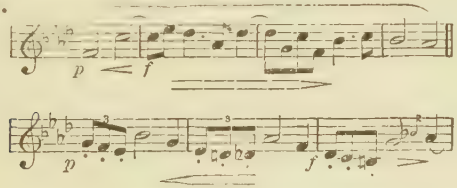


The whole passage appears to represent *Tristan* hopelessly yearning for *Isolde*, letting his fancy travel back over the watery waste to their last night

of love, and then giving himself up wholly to his grief.

The curtain rises upon the desolate grounds of Kareol, between the outer walls of *Tristan's* castle and the main structure, which stands upon a rocky eminence overlooking the sea. *Tristan* is stretched, apparently lifeless, under a huge linden tree. Over him bends the faithful *Kurwenal* in deep sorrow. A shepherd is heard piping a strain, whose plaintive notes harmonize most beautifully with the despairing desolation and sadness of the scene. It is the LAY OF SORROW:

22.

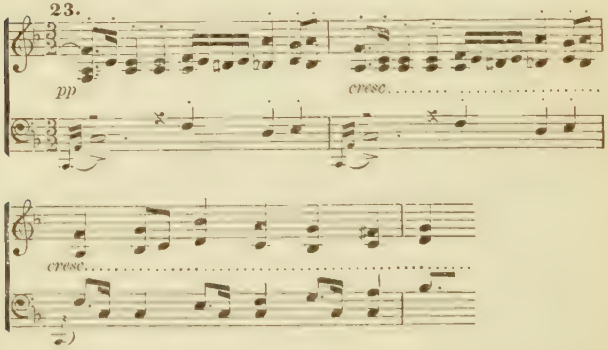


and conveys to *Kurwenal* the information that the ship he has dispatched to Cornwall to bear *Isolde* to Kareol has not yet hove in sight.

The Lay of Sorrow is a strain of mournful beauty, with the simplicity and indescribable charm of a folk song. Its plaintive notes cling like ivy to the gray and crumbling ruins of love and joy.

The *Shepherd* peers over the wall and asks if *Tristan* has shown any signs of life. *Kurwenal* gloomily replies in the negative, with the sad variant of the Isolde Motive (No. 20) and the Motive of Anguish, while the long drawn out phrase descriptive of the

watery waste accompanies his gloomy query if no ship is in sight, and also the *Shepherd's* reply as he vainly scans the horizon. He then departs to continue his lookout, piping the sad refrain. *Tristan* slowly opens his eyes. "The old refrain; why wakes it me? Where am I?" he murmurs. *Kurwenal* is beside himself with joy at these signs of returning life. His replies to *Tristan's* feeble and wandering questions are mostly couched in a motive which beautifully expresses the sterling nature of this faithful retainer:



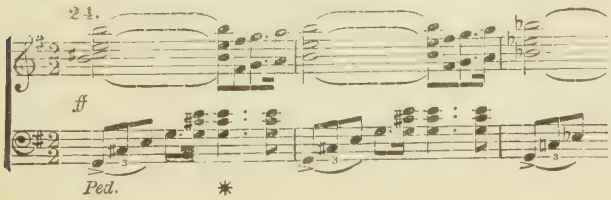
We also hear (p. 188, l. 5, b. 2; p. 189, l. 2, b. 2) a portion of the music of *Kurwenal's* reply to *Brangäne* in the first act.

Kurwenal's character is one of the noblest Wagner has drawn. *Tristan's* faithful knight is a *Wolfram von Eschenbach* in the rough. The very absence of the culture which refines the former makes *Kur-*

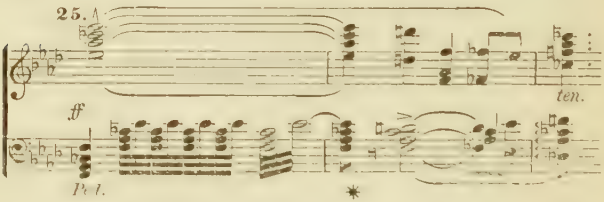
wenal's devotion the more touching. It is as pathetic as that of a great, shaggy dog.

Tristan now loses himself in memories of *Isolde*. At first her motive pervades the music and we also hear (p. 192, l. 2, b. 1, &c.) the phrases in which he asked her, after their discovery in the second act, if she would follow him. The Day Motive (No. 9) then dominates the score, broken in upon, however, with tragic force by the Death Motive (p. 194, l. 5, b. 1, &c.), until his yearning finds expression in the Love's Peace and Isolde Motives. The climax is reached when he curses the day whose light dispelled his and *Isolde's* happiness—the Day Motive, the Love Call, the Isolde Motive and the Motive of Ecstasy (p. 198, l. 3, b. 2, &c.) succeeding each other in depicting his anguish and the gradual exhaustion of his mental excitement.

Kurwenal seeks to comfort him with the news that he has sent a trusty man to Cornwall to bear *Isolde* to him that she may heal the wound inflicted by *Melot* as she once healed that dealt *Tristan* by *Morold*. The Isolde Motive and the theme of Isolde's Narrative in the first act appropriately accompany his words. In *Tristan's* jubilant reply, during which he draws *Kurwenal* to his breast, the Isolde Motive assumes a form in which it becomes a theme of joy :



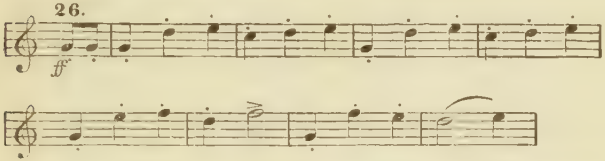
But it is soon succeeded by the Motive of Anguish, when *Tristan* raves of his yearning for *Isolde*. "The ship! the ship!" he exclaims. "*Kurwenal*, can you not see it?" The Lay of Sorrow gives the sad answer. It comes to *Tristan* with a double significance—as a memory of his mournful youth and as the hopeless reply to his question. It now pervades his sad revery until, when his mind wanders back to *Isolde's* tender nursing of his wound in Ireland, the theme of Isolde's Narrative is heard again. Finally his excitement grows upon him, and in a paroxysm of anguish bordering on insanity he even curses the love potion, a new motive, the LOVE CURSE,



being here introduced, the whole reaching its climax in the Day Motive.

Tristan sinks back apparently lifeless. But no—as *Kurwenal* bends over him and the Isolde Motive is breathed by the orchestra, he again whispers of *Isolde*. In ravishing beauty the Motive of Love's Peace caressingly follows his vision as he sees *Isolde* gliding toward him o'er the waves. With ever growing excitement he orders *Kurwenal* to the lookout to watch the ship's coming. What he sees so clearly cannot

Kurwenal also see? Suddenly the music changes in character. The *Shepherd* is heard piping a joyous lay:



It pervades the music of *Tristan's* excited questions and *Kurwenal's* answers as to the vessel's movements. The faithful retainer rushes down toward the shore to meet *Isolde* and lead her to *Tristan*. The latter, his strength sapped by his wound, his mind inflamed to insanity by his passionate yearning, struggles to rise. That phrase in which the Vorspiel reached its climax (No. 2 A) courses through the orchestra. He raises himself a little. The Motive of Love's Peace, no longer tranquil, but with frenzied rapidity, accompanies his actions as he tears the bandage from his wounds and rises from his couch. He hears *Isolde's* voice. The ecstatic Love Call pours itself out over the music like a flood of sunlight. *Tristan* staggers into *Isolde's* arms. Gently she lays him down. The Motive of the Love Glance rises in mournful beauty and *Tristan*, his gaze resting rapturously upon *Isolde*, expires. She can hardly trust her senses, and when she realizes that he is dead, her grief finds heartrending expression in the Love-Death Motive. Tumultuous sounds are heard. A second ship has arrived. *Marke* and his suite have landed. *Tristan's* men, thinking the *King* has come in pursuit of *Isolde*, attack the new comers, *Kurwenal*

and his men are overpowered, and *Kurwenal*, having avenged *Tristan* by slaying *Melot*, sinks, himself mortally wounded, dying by *Tristan's* side. He reaches out for his dead master's hand, and his last words are: "Tristan, chide me not that faithfully I follow you." *Brangäne*, who has arrived with *Marke*, tells *Isolde* she has apprised the king that she prepared a love potion for her and *Tristan* and that *Marke* has come to forgive them. But *Isolde* heeds her not. With growing transport she gazes upon her dead lover. The Love-Death Motive rises softly over the orchestra till it swells into the impassioned phrases of the Motive of Ecstasy. Upon this latter the work reaches its climax with a stupendous crash of instrumental forces and with rapturous bliss in her last glance *Isolde* sinks down upon *Tristan's* corpse and expires. In the love-death for which they prayed *Tristan* and *Isolde* are united.

EVA AND SACHS.

"THE MASTERSINGERS OF NUREMBURGH."

WHILE Wagner's music dramas are all unmistakably Wagner, they are wonderfully varied, the style of the music in each adapting itself plastically to the character of the story. One cannot, for instance, imagine the music of "Tristan" wedded to the story of "The Mastersingers." A tragic passion, inflamed by the arts of sorcery, inspired the former; in the latter we have a thoroughly human tale set to thoroughly human music. Indeed, "The Mastersinger" music differs so much in character from that of the other music dramas that in none of these does one so thoroughly appreciate the extraordinary versatility of Wagner's genius. For, while "Tristan" and "The Ring of the Nibelung" are tragic and "Parsifal" is deeply religious, "The Mastersingers of Nuremburgh" is a comic work, even bordering in one scene on farce. Wagner, like Shakespeare, was equally at home in tragedy and comedy.

The characters in "The Mastersingers" are the members of the art brotherhood, twelve in number, from which the work takes its title, chief among them being *Hans Sachs*, the cobbler poet, while *Pogner*, the goldsmith, and *Beckmesser*, the town clerk, are also prominent in the action; *Walther von Stolzing*, a young Franconian knight; *David*, *Sachs'* apprentice; *Eva*, *Pogner's* daughter, and *Magdalena*, *Eva's* nurse. The scene is laid in Nuremburgh in the middle of the sixteenth century.

Following is a brief synopsis of the plot. *Walther* is in love with *Eva*. Her father having promised her to the singer to whom at the coming midsummer festival the Mastersingers should adjudge the prize, it becomes necessary for *Walther* to seek admission to their art union. He is, however, rejected, his song violating the rules to which the Mastersingers slavishly adhere. *Beckmesser* is also instrumental in securing *Walther's* rejection. The town clerk is the "marker" of the union. His duty is to mark all violations of the rules against a candidate. *Beckmesser*, being a suitor for *Eva's* hand, naturally makes the most of every chance to put down a mark against *Walther*.

Sachs alone among the Mastersingers has recognized the beauty of *Walther's* song. Its very freedom from rule and rote charms him, and he discovers in the young knight's untrammeled genius the power which, if properly directed, will lead art from the beaten path of tradition toward a new and loftier ideal.

After *Walther's* failure before the Mastersingers he persuades *Eva* to elope with him. But at night,

as they are preparing to escape, *Beckmesser* comes upon the scene to serenade *Eva*. *Sachs*, whose house is opposite *Pogner's*, has meanwhile brought his work bench out into the street and insists on "marking" what he considers *Beckmesser's* mistakes by bringing his hammer down upon his last with a resounding whack. The louder *Beckmesser* sings the louder *Sachs* whacks. Finally the neighbors are aroused. *David*, who is in love with *Magdalena* and thinks *Beckmesser* is serenading her, falls upon him with a cudgel. The whole neighborhood turns out and a general melée ensues during which *Sachs* separates *Eva* and *Walther* and draws the latter into his house.

The following morning *Walther* sings to *Sachs* a song which has come to him in a dream, *Sachs* transcribing the words and passing friendly criticism upon them and the music. The midsummer festival is to take place that afternoon, and through a ruse *Sachs* manages to get *Walther's* poem into *Beckmesser's* possession, who, thinking the words are by the popular cobbler poet, feels sure he will be the chosen master. *Eva*, coming into the workshop to have her shoes fitted, finds *Walther* and the lovers depart with *Sachs*, *David* and *Magdalena* for the festival. Here *Beckmesser*, as *Sachs* had anticipated, makes a wretched failure, as he has utterly missed the spirit of the poem, and *Walther*, being called upon by *Sachs* to reveal its beauty in music, sings his prize song, winning at once the approbation of the Mastersingers and the populace. He is received into their art union and at the same time wins *Eva* as his bride.

In the course of the musical analysis the scenes and the development of the plot are described in detail.

The Mastersingers were of burgher extraction and flourished in Germany, chiefly in the imperial cities, during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They did much to generate and preserve a love of art among the middle classes. The compositions of members of the corporations into which the Mastersingers were formed were judged according to a code of rules which distinguished by particular names thirty-two faults to be avoided. Scriptural or devotional subjects were usually selected and the judges or Merker (markers) were in Nuremburgh four in number, the first comparing the words with the Biblical text, the second criticising the prosody, the third the rhymes and the fourth the tune. He who had the fewest marks against him received the prize. The successors of the Mastersinger corporations are the Liederkränze and Sängerbunde and similar singing societies.

Hans Sachs, the most famous of the Mastersingers, born November 5, 1494, died January, 1576, in Nuremburgh, is said to have been the author of some 6,000 poems of very varied character. He was a cobbler by trade—

> Hans Sachs was a shoe-
> Maker and poet too.

A monument was erected to him in the city of his birth in 1874.

Considering the libretti of Wagner's music dramas, independent of the music, that of "The Mastersingers" seems the most successful as a drama, probably because its plot turns upon human interests, and its characters are thus brought nearer our own point of view. In none of his other music dramas are there so many life-like figures, for in his legendary works his characters move in an atmosphere so remote that our hearts go out to the music rather than to the dramatis personæ. In "The Mastersingers," on the other hand, we recognize at once beings of our own world, and are hence keenly alive to their fortunes. Here is a simple, human love story, simply told, with many touches of humor to enliven it, and its interest enhanced by highly picturesque historical surroundings.

As a drama "The Mastersingers" is what the Germans call a Sittenbild, a perfect picture of the life and customs of Nuremburgh of the time in which the story plays. Wagner must have made careful historical researches, but this book lore is not thrust upon us. His modern muse has completely assimilated the historical material, and hence we have an art work so spontaneous that the method and manner of the art are lost sight of in one's admiration of their product. *Hans Sachs* himself could not have left a more faithful portrait of life in Nuremburgh in the middle of the sixteenth century than Wagner has given us.

"The Mastersingers" has a peculiarly Wagnerian interest. It is Wagner's protest against the narrow

minded critics and the prejudiced public who so long refused him recognition. *Walther von Stolzing* is the incarnation of new aspirations in art; the champion of a new art ideal, and continually chafing under the restraints imposed by traditional rules and methods. *Hans Sachs* is a conservative, who is, however, while preserving what is best in art traditions, not averse to recognize what is beautiful in a new art form. He represents enlightened public opinion. *Beckmesser* and the other Mastersingers are the embodiment of rank prejudice—the critics. *Walther's* triumph is also Wagner's. Few of Wagner's dramatic creations equal in life-like interest the character of *Sachs*. It is drawn with strong, firm hand, and filled in with many delicately poetic touches. *Sachs'* lovable characteristics are referred to at various points in the musical analysis.

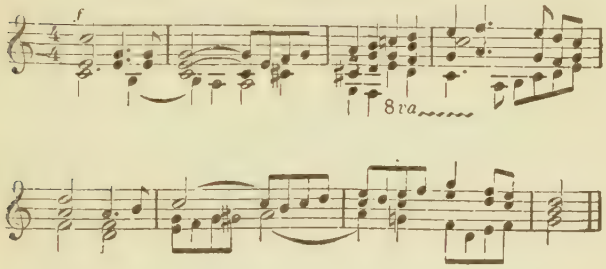
"The Mastersingers" was produced at Munich in June, 1868.

THE VORSPIEL.

The *Vorspiel* to "The Mastersingers" gives a complete musical epitome of the drama which is to unfold itself. It is full of life and action—pompous, impassioned and jocose in turn. There is nothing overwrought or morbid in it. Its sentiment and its fun are purely human—one is tempted to say, somewhat paradoxically, divinely human. Technically it has long been recognized as a masterpiece of workmanship.

It opens with the pompous MOTIVE OF THE MASTERSINGERS:

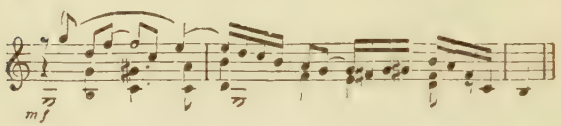
1.



a theme which gives capital musical expression to the characteristics of these dignitaries. To describe men of their class the Germans have the admirable term *Biedermänner*, whose very sound conveys the idea of self sufficient but eminently worthy citizens who are slow to receive new impressions and do not take kindly to innovations. Our term of old fogy describes them imperfectly, as it does not allow for their many excellent qualities. They are slow to act, but if they are once aroused their ponderous influence bears down all opposition. At first an obstacle to genuine reform, they are in the end the force which pushes it to success. Thus there is in the Motive of the Mastersingers a certain ponderous dignity which well emphasizes the idea of conservative power.

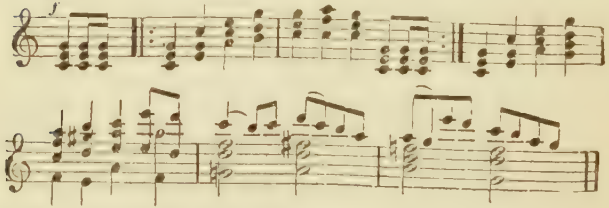
In great contrast to this is the LYRIC MOTIVE:

2.



which seems to express the striving after a poetic ideal untrammeled by old-fashioned restrictions, which are typified in this drama by the rules of the Mastersingers. But, as if the sturdy conservative forces were still unwilling to be persuaded of the worth of this new ideal, the impulsive *entrain* of the Lyric Motive is suddenly checked by the superb measures of the MASTERSINGERS' MARCH:

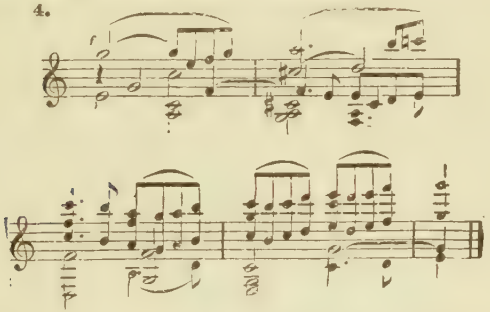
3.



in which the majesty of law and order finds eloquent expression. This is followed by a phrase of noble breadth and beauty, obviously developed from portions of the Motive of the Mastersingers, and so typical of the good will which should exist among the

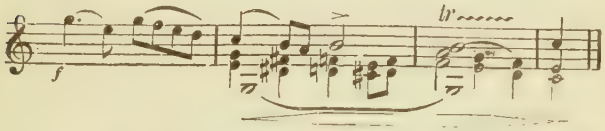
members of a fraternity that it may be called the MOTIVE OF THE ART BROTHERHOOD :

4.



It reaches an eloquent climax in the MOTIVE OF THE IDEAL :

5.

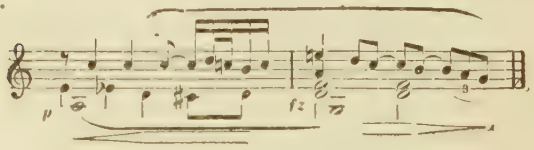


But opposed to this guild of conservative masters is the restless spirit of progress toward modern ideals. Hence, however stately the strains of the Mastersingers' March and of the Guild Motive, they are obliged to yield to a theme full of emotional energy and of much the same import as the Lyric Motive. *Walther* is the champion of this new ideal—not, however, from a purely artistic impulse, but rather through his love for *Eva*. Being ignorant of the rules and rote of the Mastersingers he sings, when he

presents himself for admission to the fraternity, measures which soar untrammeled into realms of beauty beyond the imagination of the masters. But it was his love for *Eva* which impelled him to seek admission to the brotherhood, and love inspired his song. He is therefore a reformer only by accident; it is not his love of art, but his passion for *Eva*, which really brings about through his prize song a great musical reform. This is one of Wagner's finest dramatic touches—the love story is the mainspring of the action, the moral is pointed only incidentally. Hence all the motives in which the restless striving after a new ideal or the struggles of a new art form to break through the barriers of conservative prejudice find expression are so many love motives, *Eva* being the incarnation of *Walther's* ideal.

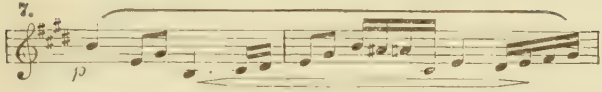
Her pretty face peeps out of every motive which in the *Vorspiel*, and indeed in the rest of the score, wells up in impassioned protest against rule and rote. Thus the motive which breaks in upon the Mastersingers' March and Guild Motive with such emotional energy expresses *Walther's* desire to possess *Eva* as much as his, or, to bring the matter right home, Wagner's yearning for a new ideal in art; and perhaps it can be most appropriately named the MOTIVE OF LONGING:

6.



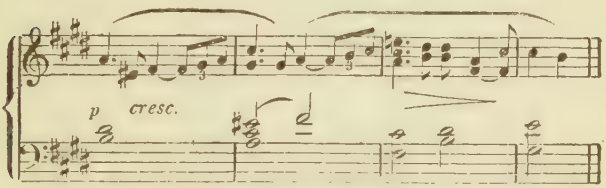
A portion of *Walther's* Prize Song,

7.



like a swiftly whispered declaration of love, leads to a variation of one of the most beautiful themes of the work—the MOTIVE OF SPRING * :

8.



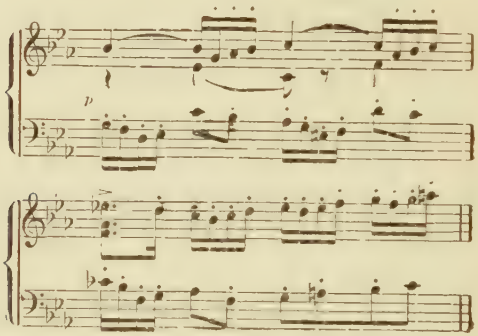
Spring is the season of love Tennyson tells us in those exquisite lines in "Locksley Hall," and it is during this season that *Walther* woos and wins *Eva*. Nature is tremorous with new life and bounding ecstatically toward the warm embrace of summer. Every leaf, every flower, every blade of grass as it quivers in the breeze adds its note to the sensuous harmony of vernal music; and to this music Wagner has given notation in the Motive of Spring.

And now Wagner has a fling at the old fogyism which was so long an obstacle to his success. He holds the masters up to ridicule in a delightfully humorous passage which parodies the Mastersingers' and Art Brotherhood Motives, while the Spring Motive

* This is the motive in its original form. The variation is found on p. 4, l. 6, b. 4.

vainly strives to assert itself. In the bass of the following quotation is the MOTIVE OF RIDICULE:

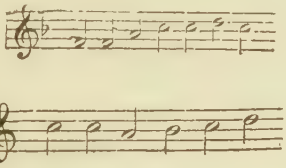
9.



the treble being a variant of the Art Brotherhood Motive. When it is considered that the opposition Wagner encountered from prejudiced critics, not to mention a prejudiced public, was the bane of his career, it seems wonderful that he should have been content to protest against it with this pleasant raillery instead of with bitter invective. But genius is usually prophetic, and Wagner probably was confident of ultimate success. This passage is followed by the Motive of the Mastersingers, which in turn leads to an imposing combination of phrases, showing Wagner's complete command of the technical resources of his art. We hear (p. 7, l. 6, b. 1, &c.) the portion of the Prize Song already quoted—the Motive of the Mastersingers as bass—and in the middle voices portions of

the Mastersingers' March ; a little later the Motive of the Art Brotherhood and the Motive of Ridicule are added, this grand massing of orchestral forces ending in a climax of stupendous power on the Ideal Motive, the Motive of the Mastersingers bringing the *Vorspiel* to a fitting close. In this noble passage, in which the Prize Song soars above the various themes typical of the masters, the new ideal seems to be borne to its triumph upon the shoulders of the conservative forces which, won over at last, have espoused its cause with all their sturdy energy.

In a rare book by J. C. Wagenseil, printed in Nuremburgh in 1697, are given four "prize Master Tones." Two of these



Wagner has reproduced in modern garb, the former in the Mastersingers' March, the latter in the Motive of the Art Brotherhood.

Act I.

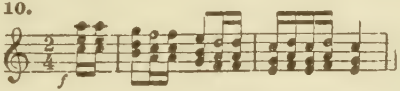
The scene is in the Church of St. Catharine, Nuremburgh. The congregation is singing the closing chorale of the service. Among the worshippers are *Eva* and her maid, *Magdalena*. *Walther* stands aside, and by means of nods and gestures communicates

with *Eva*. This mimic conversation is expressively accompanied by interludes between the verses of the chorale based on the love motives of the *Vorspiel*, Lyric, Spring and Prize Song, and contrasting charmingly with the worshipful strains of the chorale. Indeed the whole scene is most happily conceived, both musically and dramatically.

With the last line of the chorale the Motive of Spring seems, with an impetuous upward rush, to joy with the lovers that the restraint imposed by the religious service is removed, and this idea is carried out still further with the Lyric Motive, which resounds exultingly as the congregation departs, leaving *Eva*, *Magdalena* and *Walther* behind. *Eva*, in order to gain a few words with *Walther*, sends *Magdalena* back to the pew to look for a kerchief and chorale book, which she had purposely left there. The lovers' interchange of confidence is set to the Motive of Spring and to the Lyric Motive. *Magdalena* urges *Eva* to return home, but just then *David* appears in the background and begins putting things to rights for the meeting of the Mastersingers. *Magdalena* is therefore only too glad to linger. The Mastersinger and Guild Motives, which naturally accompany *David's* activity, contrast soberly with the ardent phrases of the lovers. *Magdalena* explains to *Walther* that *Eva* is already affianced, though she herself does not know to whom. Her father wishes her to marry the singer to whom at the coming contest the Mastersingers shall award the prize; and, while she shall be at liberty to decline him, she may marry none but a master.

Eva exclaims: "I will choose no one but my knight!" *Magdalena* chides her with a phrase which is derived from the Motive of the Shoemaker Guild, the COBBLER MOTIVE, which seems also from its use here and in other places to be typical of brusque and unmannerly behavior. Very pretty and gay is the theme heard when *David* joins the group—the APPRENTICE MOTIVE:

10.



The scene closes after *Magdalena* has ordered *David*, under penalty of her displeasure, to instruct the knight in the art rules of the Mastersingers, with a beautiful little terzett introduced by the Lyric Motive and formed by a union of the Prize Song and the Ideal Motives.

The apprentices, who have meanwhile entered, call on *David* to aid them in erecting the marker's platform, in which the marker, hidden from view, marks down all mistakes of the singer. These apprentices are a jolly lot and their superabundance of high spirits finds vent in a roguish chorus in which they tease the somewhat self sufficient *David*. They then go about their work, while *David* begins the task of enlightening *Walther* in regard to the rules of the Mastersingers and the conditions under which a candidate for admission to their art brotherhood must sing before his judges. The music of this entire scene is delightfully humorous. The lesson is suspended by

David, who, observing that the apprentices have not put up the platform correctly, scolds them roundly. *David* then explains to the knight what the marker's duties are, ending by wishing him good luck at the trial singing. The apprentices repeat the graceful melody after him, joining hands and dancing merrily around the platform.

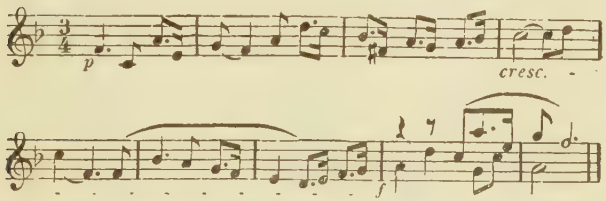
Suddenly they break away, for the masters appear. This scene, in which *Pogner* presents *Walther* as a candidate and *Kothner* calls the roll, is based musically upon a motive which, with a certain sturdy humor, reflects the old-fashioned pomposity of the proceedings :

11.

Toward the close of the roll call this motive is wreathed in a lovely union of the Guild, Prize Song and Lyric Motives, but resounds pompously as the masters take their seats. *Pogner* now addresses the masters, promising *Eva* to the victor in the Mastersong contest. "*Pogner's* Address," as this number is named on concert programs, is one of Wagner's noblest compositions for bass voice. It is rarely given with the breadth of vocal declamation necessary to its full effect, because only on very rare occasions can a performance boast of two bassi capable of personating respectively *Sachs* and *Pogner*, the former rôle naturally engaging the services of the

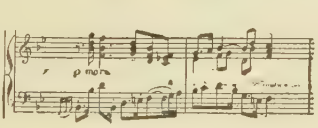
leading basso. It has never been sung here with the requisite power and expression since the famous Wagner concerts under Theodore Thomas, when Scaria's noble voice brought out all the vocal beauty of this composition. He sang especially the words "Eva, my only child," with a depth of feeling which no singer of this rôle in this country has approached. The "Address" is based upon this beautiful theme—the MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL MOTIVE:

12.



After he has added the proviso that *Eva* shall have the privilege of declining the victor's hand—a reservation which draws much unfavorable comment from all the masters but *Sachs*, who upholds *Pogner*—the latter summons *Walther* to present himself before the council. As *Walther* appears the KNIGHT MOTIVE is heard:

13.



Kothner asks him from whom he received instruction in poetry and singing. He replies in a song of exquisite

beauty (p. 96) that his master in poetry was the Minnesinger *Walther von der Vogelweid*, and, in singing, nature herself. A phrase of this song, which is repeated several times in the course of the work, forms the VOGELWEID MOTIVE (p. 96, l. 4, b. 2—p. 97, l. 1, b. 2).

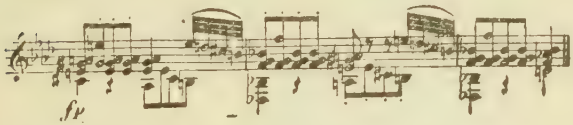
A fragment of the Mastersingers' Motive denotes the utter surprise of the masters at *Walther's* song. *Beckmesser* now enters the marker's box. He is jealous of the knight, and eager to have him fail. Therefore we find here in union with the Knight Motive the MARKER MOTIVE :

14.

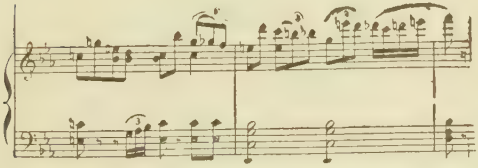
Kothner now begins reading off the rules of singing established by the masters, his discourse being set to music, which is a capital take-off on old-fashioned forms of composition and never fails to raise a hearty laugh if delivered with considerable pomposity and unction. Unwillingly enough *Walther* takes his seat in the candidate's chair. *Beckmesser* shouts from the marker's box : "Now begin!" After a brilliant chord, followed by a superb ascending run on the violins, *Walther* in ringing tones, enforced by a broad and noble chord, repeats *Beckmesser's* words. But such a change has come over the music that it seems as if that upward rushing run had swept away all restraint

of ancient rule and rote, just as the spring wind whirling through the forest tears up the spread of dry, dead leaves, thus giving air and sun to the yearning mosses and flowers. In *Walther's* song the Spring Motive forms an ever surging, swelling accompaniment, finally joining in the vocal melody and bearing it higher and higher to an impassioned climax. In his song *Walther* is, however, interrupted by the scratching made by *Beckmesser* as he chalks the singer's violations of the rules on the slate, and *Walther*, who is singing of love and spring, changes his theme to winter, which, lingering behind a thorny hedge, is plotting how it can mar the joy of the vernal season. The knight then rises from the chair and

15—A.



B.

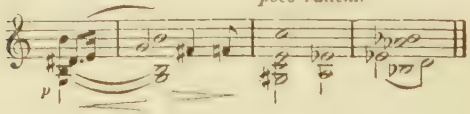


sings a second stanza with defiant enthusiasm. As he concludes it *Beckmesser* tears open the curtains which concealed him in the marker's box, and exhib-

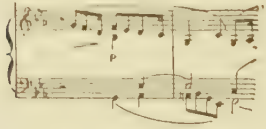
its his board completely covered with chalk marks. *Walther* protests, but the masters, with the exception of *Sachs* and *Pogner*, refuse to listen further, and deride his singing. We have here the MOTIVE OF DERISION, sometimes used in its simplest form, 15 A, but more frequently with a characteristic addition, as at B.

Keenly satirical is the use (p. 122, l. 3, b. 4, &c.) of the Spring Motive, when the masters exclaim : "Who calls that singing?" With *Sachs'* protest that not everyone is of their opinion—that while he found the knight's art method new, he did not find it formless—the SACHS MOTIVE (17) is introduced, being, however, preceded by the MOTIVE OF ENVY (16), characteristic of the bitter feeling against which he protests :

16.



17.



The Sachs Motive betokens the genial nature of this sturdy yet gentle man. He is the master spirit of the drama. He combines the force of a conservative character with the tolerance of a progressive one, and is thus the incarnation of the idea which Wagner

is working out in this drama, in which the union of a proper degree of conservative caution with progressive energy produces a new ideal in art. With *Sachs'* innuendo that *Beckmesser's* marking could hardly be considered just, as he is a candidate for *Eva's* hand, we have the Sachs Motive beautifully utilized as an accompaniment to the Midsummer Festival Motive. *Beckmesser*, in reply, chides *Sachs* for having delayed so long in finishing a pair of shoes for him, and as *Sachs* makes a humorously apologetic reply the Cobbler Motive is heard (p. 130, l. 4, b. 2).

The sturdy burgher calls to *Walther* to finish his song in spite of the masters. And now a finale of masterful construction begins. In short, excited phrases the masters chaff and deride *Walther*. His song, however, soars above all the hubbub. The apprentices see their opportunity in the confusion, and joining hands they dance around the marker's box, singing as they do so. We now have combined with astounding skill *Walther's* song, the apprentices' chorus and the exclamations of the masters. The latter finally shout their verdict: "Rejected and outsung!" and the knight, with a proud gesture of contempt, leaves the church. The orchestra carries the melody of the apprentices' chorus further, while the young fellows put the seats and benches back in their proper places, and in doing so greatly obstruct the masters as they crowd toward the doors. The apprentices' melody is interrupted by the exquisite harmonies of the Spring Motive as *Sachs*, who has lingered behind, gazes thoughtfully at the empty sing-

er's chair, and then, with a humorous gesture of discouragement, turns away. The Mastersingers' Motive, ending with the chords to which the masters shouted their verdict at *Walther*, brings the act to a close.

Act II.

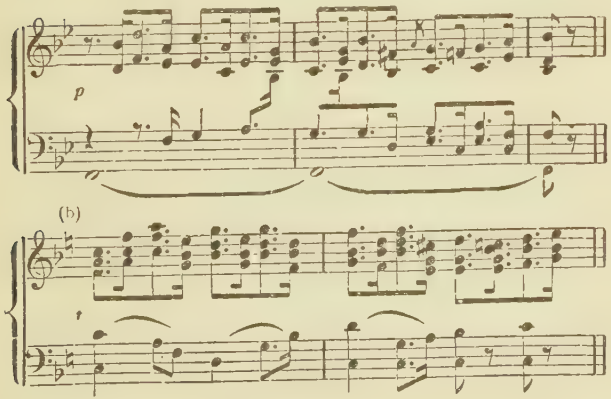
The scene of this act represents a street in Nuremburgh crossing the stage and intersected in the middle by a narrow, winding alley. There are thus two corner houses—on the right corner of the alley *Pogner's*, on the left *Sachs'*. Before the former is a linden tree, before the latter an elder. It is a lovely summer evening.

The opening scene is a merry one. *David* and the apprentices are closing shop. After a brisk introduction based on the Midsummer Festival Motive the apprentices quiz *David* on his love affair with *Magdalena*. The latter appears with a basket of dainties for her lover, but on learning that the knight has been rejected she snatches the basket from *David* and hurries back into the house. The apprentices now mockingly congratulate *David* on his successful wooing. *David* loses his temper and shows fight, but *Sachs*, coming upon the scene, sends the apprentices on their way and then enters his workshop with *David*. The music of this episode, especially the apprentices' chorus, is delightfully bright and graceful.

Pogner and *Eva*, returning from an evening stroll, now come down the alley. Before retiring into the house the father questions the daughter as to her

feelings concerning the duty she is to perform at the Mastersinging on the morrow. Her replies are discreetly evasive. The music beautifully reflects the affectionate relations between *Pogner* and *Eva*; in fact the entire scene is both dramatically and musically a masterpiece of tender grace. Most exquisite is the passage beginning four bars before *Pogner's* words, "And thou my child?" on page 165, the rippling runs on the clarinet which accompany *Eva's* replies seeming to reproduce, as Heintz suggests, the slight chilliness of the evening air. When *Pogner*, his daughter seated beside him under the linden tree, speaks of the morrow's festival and *Eva's* part in it in awarding the prize to the master of her choice before the assembled burghers of Nuremburgh, the stately NUREMBURGH MOTIVE is ushered in:

18.



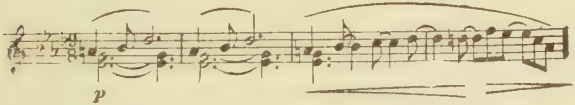
Magdalena appears at the door and signals to *Eva*. The latter persuades her father that it is too cool to remain outdoors and, as they enter the house, *Eva* learns from *Magdalena* of *Walther's* failure before the masters. *Magdalena* advises her to seek counsel with *Sachs* after supper.

The Cobbler Motive shows us *Sachs* and *David* in the former's workshop. When the master has dismissed his 'prentice till morning he yields to his poetic love of the balmy midsummer night and, laying down his work, leans over the half door of his shop as if lost in reverie. The Cobbler Motive dies away to *pp*, and then there is wafted from over the orchestra like the sweet scent of the blooming elder the Spring Motive, while tender notes on the horn blossom beneath a nebulous veil of *tremolo* violins into memories of *Walther's* wooing song. Its measures run through *Sachs'* head until, angered at the stupid conservatism of his associates, he resumes his work to the brusque measures of the Cobbler's Motive. As his ill humor yields again to the beauties of the night, this motive yields once more to that of spring, which, with reminiscences of *Walther's* first song before the masters (a measure of the Prize Song being also heard at p. 175, l. 3, b. 3), imbues this masterful monologue with poetic beauty of the highest order. The last words in praise of *Walther* ("The bird who sang today," &c.,) are sung to a broad and expressive melody.

Eva now comes out into the street and, shyly approaching the shop, stands at the door unnoticed by *Sachs* until she speaks to him. The theme which

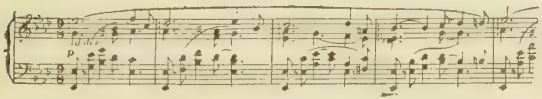
pervades this scene seems to breathe forth the very spirit of lovely maidenhood which springs from the union of romantic aspirations, feminine reserve and rare physical graces. It is the EVA MOTIVE, which, with the delicate touch of a master, Wagner so varies that it follows the many subtle dramatic suggestions of the scene. The EVA MOTIVE in its original form is as follows:

19.



There is a suggestion of it in a phrase in *Walther's* first song (p. 97, l. 1, b. 2, &c.), a suggestion which gains further significance from the fact that this phrase from *Walther's* song introduces the present scene as *Eva* steps over to *Sachs'* shop. This is followed, when at *Eva's* first words *Sachs* looks up, by an elegant variation of her Motive:

20.



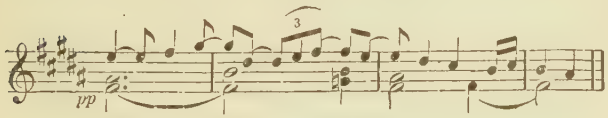
Then, the scene being now fully ushered in, we have the Eva Motive itself. *Eva* leads the talk up to the morrow's festival, and when *Sachs* mentions *Beckmesser* as her chief wooer, roguishly hints, with evident reference to *Sachs* himself, that she might pre-

fer a hearty widower to a bachelor of such disagreeable characteristics as the marker. There are sufficient indications that the sturdy master is not indifferent to *Eva's* charms, but, whole souled, genuine friend that he is, his one idea is to further the love affair between his fair young neighbor and *Walther*. The music of this passage is very suggestive. The melodic leading of the upper voice in the accompaniment, when *Eva* asks "Could not a widower hope to win me?" (p. 180, l. 3, b. 1–3), is identical with a variation of the Isolde Motive in "Tristan and Isolde," while the Eva Motive, shyly *pp*, seems to indicate the artfulness of *Eva's* question. The reminiscence from "Tristan" can hardly be regarded as accidental, for *Sachs* afterward boasts that he does not care to share the fate of poor *King Marke*. *Eva* now endeavors to glean particulars of *Walther's* experience in the morning, and we have the Motive of Envy (16) (derived from the Eva Motive, as if to show the contrast between her goodness and the malice of those who judged *Walther*), the Knight Motive and the Motive of Ridicule. *Eva* does not appreciate the fine satire in *Sachs'* severe strictures on *Walther's* singing—he re-echoes not his own views, but those of the other masters, for whom, not for the knight, his strictures are really intended—and she leaves him in anger. This shows *Sachs* which way the wind blows, and he forthwith resolves to do all in his power to bring *Eva's* and *Walther's* love affair to a successful conclusion. While *Eva* is engaged with *Magdalena*, who has come out to call her, he busies

himself in closing the upper half of his shop door so far that only a gleam of light is visible, he himself being completely hidden. *Eva* learns from *Magdalena* of *Beckmesser's* intended serenade and it is agreed that the maid shall personate *Eva* at the window.

Steps are heard coming down the alley. *Eva* recognizes *Walther* and flies to his arms, *Magdalena* discreetly hurrying into the house. The ensuing ardent scene between *Eva* and *Walther* brings familiar motives. The knight's excitement is comically broken in upon by the *Night Watchman's* cow horn, and, as *Eva* lays her hand soothingly upon his arm and counsels that they retreat within the shadow of the linden tree, there steals over the orchestra, like the fragrance of the summer night, a delicate variant of the Eva Motive—THE SUMMER NIGHT MOTIVE:

21.



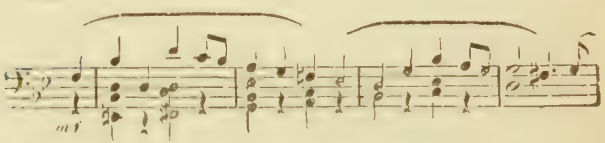
to which, when *Eva* vanishes into the house to prepare to elope with *Walther*, there is united a phrase from the Prize Song (p. 204, l. 1, b. 4—p. 205. l. 3, b. 5). The *Night Watchman* now goes up the stage intoning a chant still in vogue in the cities of Germany in the early part of this century. Coming in the midst of the beautiful modern music of "The Mastersingers," its effect is highly comical, yet not without its quaint pathos. The last variant of the

Eva Motive is now resumed, and as *Eva* reappears the music dashes joyfully into the Prize Song Motive. As she and the knight are about to make their escape, *Sachs*, to prevent this precipitate and foolish step, throws open his shutters and allows his lamp to shed a streak of brilliant light across the street.

The lovers hesitate; and now *Beckmesser* sneaks in after the *Night Watchman* and, leaning against *Sachs'* house, begins to tune his lute, the peculiar twang of which, contrasted with the rich orchestration, sounds irresistibly ridiculous.

Meanwhile *Eva* and *Walther* have once more retreated into the shade of the linden tree, and *Sachs*, who has placed his work bench in front of his door, begins hammering at the last and intones a song of which Heintz remarks that it is one of the most precious pearls of musical invention. Perhaps it might be more in keeping with the character of the melody to call it one of the rough diamonds of musical invention, for it is purposely brusque and rough, just such a song as a hearty, happy artisan might sing over his work:

22.



It is aptly introduced by the Cobbler Motive. *Beckmesser*, greatly disturbed lest his serenade should

be ruined, entreats *Sachs* to cease singing. The latter agrees, with the proviso, however, that he shall "mark" each of *Beckmesser's* mistakes with a hammer stroke. As if to bring out as sharply as possible the ridiculous character of the serenade the orchestra breathes forth once more the summer night's music (21) before *Beckmesser* begins his song, which is set to a parody of the Lyric Motive,

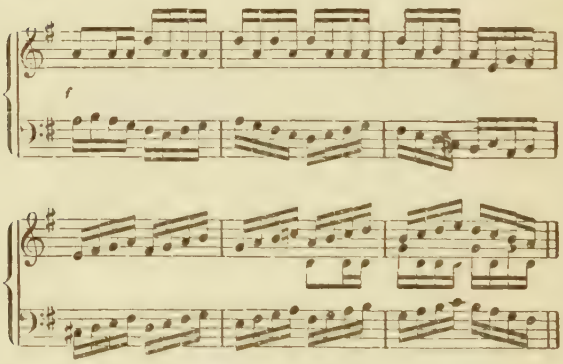
23.

as if Wagner, with keen satire, wished to show how a beautiful melody may become absurd through old fogy methods. *Beckmesser* has hardly begun before *Sachs'* hammer comes down on the last with a resounding whack, which makes the town clerk fairly jump with anger. He resumes his serenade, which, however, is soon once more rudely interrupted by a blow of *Sachs'* hammer. The whacks come faster and faster. *Beckmesser*, in order to make himself heard above them, sings louder and louder. Some of the neighbors are awakened by the noise and coming to their windows bid *Beckmesser* hold his peace. *David*, stung by jealousy as he sees *Magdalena* listening to the serenade, leaps from his room and falls upon the town clerk with a cudgel. The neighbors, male and female, run out into the street and a general melée ensues, the masters, who hurry upon the scene, seeking to restore quiet, while the apprentices vent

their high spirits by doing all in their power to add to the hubbub. All is now noise and disorder, pandemonium seeming to have been let loose upon the dignified old town.

Musically this tumult finds expression in a fugue whose chief theme is the CUDGEL MOTIVE:

24.



With rare humor the various parts of the fugue are divided among the apprentices and journeymen, who are heart and soul in the fight, the terrified women and the masters. The motive of poor *Beckmesser's* song, which was the cause of the disturbance, figures as *cantus firmus* in the fugue, an inspiration as happy from a dramatic as from a musical point of view. The uproar having reached its height, *Sachs*, who seems to consider that *Beckmesser* has had punishment enough, interferes, drives off *David*, who is still belaboring the town clerk, shoves the journey-

men and 'prentices out of the way, and, having gradually cleared the street, pushes *Eva*, with whom *Walther* was seeking to escape unnoticed through the crowd, into her father's arms, and drags *Walther* into the shop with him.

Uproariously farcical as this scene has been it is now followed by a touch of nature which, in its quiet way, is even more humorous. For when the street is again clear and the turmoil has subsided, the *Night Watchman* appears on the scene rubbing his eyes, and in a sleepy voice intones his ludicrous chant. The moon has risen and floods the scene with its soft white light. As the watchman makes his way up the alley he lunges at his shadow with his clumsy halberd. The Midsummer Night music, *con sordini* on the violins, the Cudgel Motive, with exceeding delicacy on the flute, and the serenade on the clarinet and afterward roguishly on the bassoon, give elfish grace and merriment to the music, the act ending with a heavy chord.

Act III.

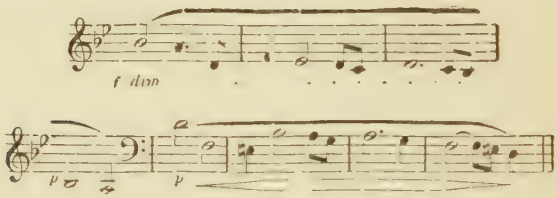
During this act the tender strain in *Sachs'* sturdy character is brought out in bold relief. Hence the prelude develops what may be called three *Sachs* themes, two of them expressive of his twofold nature as poet and cobbler—

(Hans Sachs was a shoe-
Maker and poet, too !)—

the third standing for the love which his fellow burghers bore him.

The prelude opens with the MOTIVE OF POETIC ILLUSION,

25.



which reflects the deep thought and poetic aspirations of *Sachs* the poet. This is followed by the beautiful chorus, sung later in the act, in praise of *Sachs:* "Awake! draws nigh the break of day." The second part is introduced later in the prelude. This is that theme among the three heard in the prelude which points to *Sachs'* popularity. The third consists of portions of the cobbler's song in the second act. This prelude has long been considered one of Wagner's masterpieces. The themes are treated with the utmost delicacy, so that we recognize through them both the tender, poetic side of *Sachs'* nature and his good humored brusqueness. THE MOTIVE OF POETIC ILLUSION is deeply reflective, and it might be preferable to name it the Motive of Poetic Thought, were it not that it is better to preserve the significance of the term *Wahn Motif*, which there is ample reason to believe originated with Wagner himself. The prelude is a subtle dramatic study and, is, from a certain point of view, perhaps the most dramatic bit of music in Wagner's works. For

here is music which is more than a graphic accompaniment to action or a reflection of thought. The prelude is, in fact, a subtle analysis of character expressed in music.

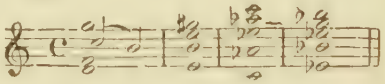
The curtain rises upon a peaceful scene. *Sachs* is sitting in an armchair in his sunny workshop, reading in a large folio. The Illusion Motive has not yet died away in the prelude, so that it seems to reflect the thoughts awakened in *Sachs* by what he is reading. *David*, dressed for the festival, enters just as the prelude ends. There is a scene full of charming *bonhomie* between *Sachs* and his 'prentice, which is followed, when the latter has withdrawn, by *Sachs'* monologue: "Wahn! Wahn! Ueberall Wahn!" (Illusion! everywhere illusion!).

While the Illusion Motive seems to weave a poetic atmosphere about him, *Sachs*, buried in thought, rests his head upon his arm over the folio. The Illusion Motive is followed by the Spring Motive, which in turn yields to the Nuremburgh Motive as *Sachs* sings the praises of the stately old town. At his reference to the tumult of the night before there are in the score corresponding allusions to the music of that episode. Then the Summer Night Motive, a phrase of *Beckmesser's* serenade and the Cudgel Motive, the first in all its dreamy beauty, the last two in a setting of exquisite delicacy, cast an elfish spell over *Sachs'* meditation. "Some glow worm could not find its mate," he sings, referring to *Walther* and *Eva*. The Midsummer Festival, Lyric and Nuremburgh motives in union foreshadow the triumph of true art through

love on Nuremburgh soil, and thus bring the monologue to a stately conclusion.

Walther now enters from the chamber, which opens upon a gallery, and, descending into the workshop, is heartily greeted by *Sachs* with the Sachs Motive, which dominates the immediately ensuing scene. Very beautiful is the theme (p. 310) in which *Sachs* protests against *Walther's* derision of the masters; for they are, in spite of their many old fogyish notions, the conservators of much that is true and beautiful in art. Noteworthy before this (p. 301, l. 1, b. 3–5) is the DREAM MOTIVE,

26.



a dreamy succession of chords, when *Walther* tells *Sachs* of the song which came to him in a dream during the night.

Walther sings two stanzas of this Prize Song, *Sachs* making friendly critical comments as he writes down the words of the song. The Nuremburgh Motive in sonorous and festive instrumentation closes this exquisitely melodious episode.

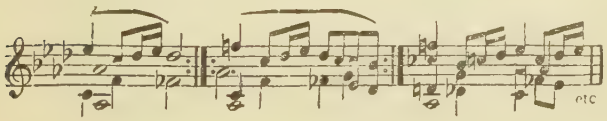
When *Sachs* and *Walther* have retired *Beckmesser* is seen peeping into the shop. Observing that it is empty he enters hastily. He is ridiculously overdressed for the approaching festival, limps and occasionally rubs his muscles as if he were still stiff and sore from his drubbing. He is excited to strange actions, denoting terror, as if he were recalling his sad

plight of the night before, until his glance falls on the manuscript of the Prize Song in *Sachs'* handwriting on the table, when he breaks forth in wrathful exclamations, thinking now that he has in the popular master a rival for *Eva's* hand. Hearing the chamber door opening he hastily grabs the manuscript and thrusts it into his pocket. *Sachs* enters. Observing that the manuscript is no longer on the table he conceives the idea of allowing *Beckmesser* to keep it, knowing that he will fail most wretchedly in attempting to give musical expression to *Walther's* inspiration.

This scene places *Sachs* in a new light. A fascinating trait of his character is the dash of scapegrace with which it is seasoned. Hence, when he thinks of allowing *Beckmesser* to use the poem the Sachs Motive takes on a somewhat facetious, roguish grace (p. 340, l. 1, b. 4, &c.). Other motives which are prominent in this scene are already familiarly associated with *Beckmesser's* character.

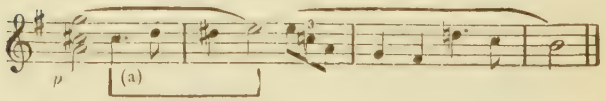
There now ensues a charming dialogue between *Sachs* and *Eva*, who enters when *Beckmesser* has departed. This is accompanied by a transformation of the Eva Motive, which reflects her shyness and hesitancy in taking *Sachs* into her confidence, and hence may be called the MOTIVE OF MAIDENLY RESERVE:

27.



With it is joined the Cobbler Motive when *Eva* places her foot upon the stool while *Sachs* tries on the shoes she is to wear at the festival. When, with a cry of joy, she recognizes her lover as he appears upon the gallery, and remains motionless, gazing upon him as if spellbound, the lovely Summer Night Motive enhances the beauty of the tableau. While *Sachs* cobbles and chats away, pretending not to observe the lovers, the Motive of Maidenly Reserve passes through many modulations until there is heard a phrase from "Tristan and Isolde" (the Isolde Motive), an allusion which is explained below. The Lyric Motive introduces the third stanza of *Walther's* Prize Song, with which he now greets *Eva*. Overcome with joy, she sinks upon *Sachs'* breast, the Illusion Motive rhapsodizing the praises of the generous cobbler-poet, who seeks relief from his emotions in bantering remarks, until *Eva* glorifies him in a noble burst of love and gratitude in a melody derived from the Isolde Motive:

28.



It is after this that *Sachs*, alluding to his own love of *Eva*, exclaims that he will have none of *King Marke's* triste experience; and the use of the King Marke Motive at this point shows that the previous echoes of the Isolde Motive were premeditated rather than accidental.

Magdalena and *David* now enter and *Sachs* gives to *Walther's* Prize Song its musical baptism, utilizing chiefly the first and second lines of the choral which opens the first act. *David* then kneels down and, according to the custom of the day, receives from *Sachs* a box on the ear in token that he is advanced from 'prentice to journeyman. Then follows the beautiful quintette, in which the Prize Song, as a thematic germ, puts forth its loveliest blossoms. This is but one of many instances in which Wagner proved that when the dramatic situation called for it he could conceive and develop a melody of the most exquisite fibre.

After the quintette the orchestra resumes the Nuremburgh Motive and all depart for the festival. The stage is now shut off by a curtain behind which the scene is changed from *Sachs'* workshop to the meadow on the banks of the Pegnitz, near Nuremburgh. After a tumultuous orchestral interlude, which admirably portrays by means of already familiar motives, with the addition of the fanfare of the town musicians, the noise and bustle incidental to preparations for a great festival, the curtain rises upon a lively scene. Boats decked out in flags and bunting and full of festively clad members of the various guilds and their wives and children are constantly arriving. To the right is a platform decorated with the flags of the guilds which have already gathered. People are making merry under tents and awnings where refreshments are served. The 'prentices are having a jolly time of it heralding and marshalling

the guilds who disperse and mingle with the merry-makers after the standard bearers have planted their banners near the platform.

Soon after the curtain rises the cobblers arrive, and as they march down the meadow, conducted by the 'prentices, they sing in honor of St. Crispin, their patron saint, a chorus, based on the Cobbler Motive, to which a melody in popular style is added. The town watchmen, with trumpets and drums, the town pipers, lute makers, &c., and then the journeymen, with comical sounding toy instruments, march past, and are succeeded by the tailors, who sing a humorous chorus, telling how Nuremburgh was saved from its ancient enemies by a tailor, who sewed a goatskin around him and pranced around on the town walls, to the terror of the hostile army, which took him for the devil. The bleating of a goat is capitally imitated in this chorus, one division (p. 391, l. 1, b. 2 and 3) parodying Rossini's "Di' tanti palpiti."

With the last chord of the tailors' chorus the bakers strike up their song and are greeted in turn by cobblers and tailors with their respective refrains. A boatful of young peasant girls in gay costumes now arrives, and the 'prentices make a rush for the bank. A charming dance in waltz time is now struck up. The 'prentices with the girls dance down toward the journeymen, but as soon as these try to get hold of the girls, the 'prentices veer off with them in another direction. This veering should be timed to fall at the beginning of those periods of the dance to which Wagner has given, instead of eight measures,

seven and nine, in order by this irregularity to emphasize the amusing ruse of the 'prentices.

The dance is interrupted by the arrival of the masters, the 'prentices falling in to receive, the others making room for the procession. The Mastersingers advance to the stately strains of the Mastersinger Motive, which, when *Kothner* appears bearing their standard with the figure of King David playing on his harp, goes over into the sturdy measures of the Mastersingers' March. *Sachs* rises and advances. At sight of him the populace intone the noblest of all choruses, "Awake! draws nigh the break of day," the words of which are a poem by the historic Hans Sachs, from the song of the Reformation, "The Nightingale of Wittenberg."

At its conclusion the populace break out into shouts in praise of *Sachs*, who modestly yet most feelingly gives them thanks. The Illusion, Sachs, Art Brotherhood, Lyric and Midsummer Festival Motives are here employed with beautiful effect. When *Beckmesser* is led to the little mound of turf upon which the singer is obliged to stand we have the humorous variation of the Mastersinger Motive from the Prelude (p. 5, l. 5, b. 3, &c.). *Beckmesser's* attempt to sing *Walther's* poem ends, as *Sachs* had anticipated, in utter failure. The town clerk's effort is received with jeers. Before he rushes away, infuriated but utterly discomfited, he proclaims that *Sachs* is the author of the song they have derided. The cobbler poet declares to the people that it is not by him; that it is a beautiful poem if sung to the proper melody and that he will show them

the author of the poem, who will in song disclose its beauties. He then introduces *Walther*. The knight easily succeeds in winning over people and masters, who repeat the closing melody of his Prize Song in token of their joyous appreciation of his new and wondrous art. *Pogner* advances to decorate *Walther* with the insignia of the Mastersingers' Guild, but the knight turns unwillingly away.

In measures easily recognized from the Prelude, to which the Nuremburgh Motive is added, *Sachs* now praises the masters and explains their noble purpose as conservators of art. *Eva* takes the wreath with which *Walther* has been crowned, and with it crowns *Sachs*, who has meanwhile decorated the knight with the insignia. *Pogner* kneels, as if in homage, before *Sachs*, the masters point to the cobbler poet as to their chief, and *Walther* and *Eva* remain on either side of him, leaning gratefully upon his shoulders. The chorus repeats *Sachs'* final admonition to the closing measures of the Prelude.

PARSIFAL.

"PARSIFAL."

"Parsifal" is a familiar name to those who have heard "Lohengrin." *Lohengrin*, it will be remembered, tells *Elsa* that he is *Parsifal's* son and one of the knights of the Holy Grail. The name is written Percival in "Lohengrin," as well as in Tennyson's "Idyls of the King." Now, however, Wagner returns to the quainter and more "Teutonic" form of spelling. As "Parsifal" deals with an earlier period in the history of the Grail knighthood than "Lohengrin," the later music drama is in a measure a prelude to the earlier, and there is a resemblance between the Grail music in "Parsifal" and the "Lohengrin" music —a resemblance not in melody, nor even in outline, but merely in the purity and spirituality that breathes through both. Then, too, both *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal* are for a wonder at once both virtuous and interesting. Wagner is rarely virtuous without becoming monotonous. In "Tannhäuser," for instance, the lays and relays of the minstrels at the prize singing to virtuous love are rather dull, and the action lags until *Tannhäuser* suddenly intones his rhapsody over the unholy charms of Venus. And indeed it is not *Parsifal's* virtue so much as the temptations to which it is

subjected that make him an interesting hero, the temptations, as usual, having inspired Wagner more than the virtue.

Wagner found the principal characters in this music drama in three legends: "Percival le Galois; or, Contes de Grail," by Chretiens de Troyes (1190); "Parsifal," by Wolfram von Eschenbach, and a manuscript of the fourteenth century called by scholars the "Mabinogion." He has not held himself strictly to any one of these, but has combined them all.

The plot of "Parsifal" is briefly as follows: *Amfortas*, King of the Knights of the Holy Grail, who dwell in the castle of Montsalvat among the mountains of Gothic Spain, is enticed by *Kundry*, a lovely woman under the sway of *Klingsor*, an evil magician on the southern slope of the same mountains, supposed to be facing Arabian Spain, into *Klingsor's* magic garden. While in her arms *Amfortas* drops the holy spear, which is at once seized by *Klingsor*, who wounds the King therewith and carries it off. *Amfortas* cannot recover from the wound until it has been touched by the spear, which can be wrested from *Klingsor* only by the "guileless fool" (*der reine Thor*), one who has been all his life ignorant of sin, who through deep sympathy with the anguish of *Amfortas* becomes conscious of the King's sin and can resist temptation though it come to him ever so enticingly. Such an one is *Parsifal*. By resisting *Kundry's* charms he regains the spear, destroys *Klingsor* and thus frees *Kundry* from his evil sway, heals the wound of *Amfortas* and is proclaimed King of the Knighthood.

The plot is allegorical. *Parsifal* is the personification of Christianity, *Klingsor* of Paganism, and the triumph of *Parsifal* over *Klingsor* is the triumph of Christianity over Paganism.

The Holy Grail, according to a twelfth century manuscript, Robert de Boron's "Petit Saint Grail," is the vessel into which the Saviour poured the wine at the Last Supper, and in which Joseph of Arimathea caught the blood which flowed from the spear wound in our Saviour's side. Chretiens de Troyes follows De Boron, but in Wolfram's version the Grail becomes a stone placed in the keeping of the Grail Knights at Montsalvat by messengers from Heaven. Wagner follows De Boron and Chretiens de Troyes, but adopts the uncovering of the holy vessel every Good Friday to strengthen and inspire the knights in the performance of their duties.

Wagner also follows the French legends in assuming the holy spear to be no other than the weapon thrust by Longinus into the side of the Saviour. *Amfortas* (meaning powerless), the wounded King, figures in all the legends; he suffering in all for the same crime against the laws of the knighthood, and to be saved only by the champion Peredur, Perceval, Parzival or Parsifal, as he is known in the various legends. Wagner adopts Görres' derivation of the name from the Arabian Parseh-Fal, "the guileless fool." In the Mabinogi manuscript and in the legend of Chretiens *Parsifal's* simple question as to what the spear and the Grail are, and in Wolfram's legend a simple question concerning the King's wound, will

restore *Amfortas*. Reared in the wild woods by his mother, *Parsifal* is lured from this retreat by a troop of knights in brilliant armor and mounted on richly caparisoned horses. He comes to the Castle of the Grail, but does not ask and goes forth again into the world. Afterward he is cursed for this omission, according to the Mabinogi manuscript, by a wild, black haired maiden, called by Chretiens *La Demoiselle* and by Wolfram *Kondrie la Sorcière*, who bids *Parsifal* seek again for the Castle of the Grail. He finds it after many adventures and asks the question. Wagner requires that he must regain the spear and touch the wound of *Amfortas*, which is, of course, more dramatic than the simple act of questioning.

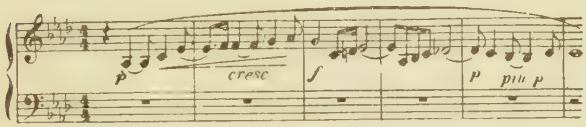
Kundry is a sort of female Ahasuerus—a wandering Jewess. In the Mabinogi manuscript she is no other than Herodias, condemned to wander forever because she laughed at the head of John the Baptist. Here Wagner makes another change. According to him she is condemned for laughing in the face of the Saviour as he was bearing the cross. She seeks forgiveness by serving the Grail Knights as messenger on her swift horse, but ever and anon she is driven by the curse hanging over her back to *Klingsor*, who changes her to a beautiful woman and places her in his garden to lure the Knights of the Grail. She can be freed only by one who resists her temptations. Finally she is freed by *Parsifal* and is baptized. In her character of Grail messenger she has much in common with the wild messengers of Walhalla, the Walkyries. Indeed, in the Edda her name appears

in the first part of the compound Gundryggja, which denotes the office of the Walkyries.

The Vorspiel.

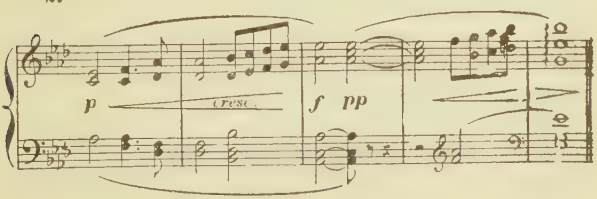
The *Vorspiel* is based on three of the most deeply religious motives in the entire work. It opens with the Motive of the Sacrament,

1. A.



over which, when it is repeated, arpeggios hover, as in the religious paintings of old masters angel forms float above the figure of virgin or saint. Through this motive we gain insight into the office of the Knights of the Grail, who from time to time strengthen themselves for their spiritual duties by partaking of the communion, on which occasions the Grail itself is uncovered. This motive at once inspires the hearer with reverence. The passage having been repeated in another key and with a slight variation, giving it a more tragic character, leads to the Grail Motive,

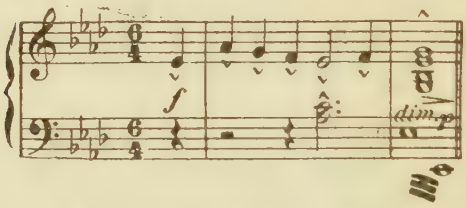
2.



effectively swelling to *forte* and then dying away in ethereal harmonies, like the soft light with which the Grail illumines the hall in which the knights gather for worship.

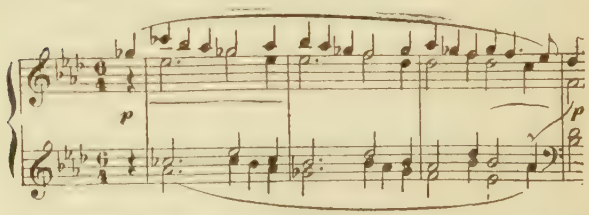
The trumpets then announce the MOTIVE OF FAITH,

3.



a phrase of elemental strength, with its severe but powerful outlines, and portraying superbly the immutability of a perfect faith. After the Grail Motive has been heard again the Motive of Faith is repeated, but so varied that its severity is softened from a stalwart confession of faith to that sense of exquisite peace which "passeth all understanding."

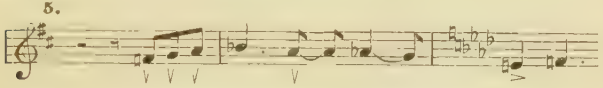
4.



The rest of the *Vorspiel* has the Motive of the Sacrament as a basis, its character being, however, so

changed as to express sorrowful agitation, thus portraying *Amfortas* suffering for his sin. That portion of the Motive of the Sacrament which appears later as the Spear Motive (1 A) assumes through a slight change a deeply sad character, and becomes typical throughout the work of the sorrow wrought by *Amfortas*' crime, and becomes the ELEGIAC MOTIVE.

5.



Thus we have depicted in the *Vorspiel* the religious duties which play so prominent a part in the drama, and also the unhappiness which *Amfortas*' sinful forgetfulness of these duties has brought upon himself and his knights.

ACT I.

The curtain rises on a tranquil scene. It is dawn. *Gurnemanz*, an old but vigorous knight, and two pages are sleeping beneath the shade of a huge oak. To the back the ground slopes to a low lying forest lake. The way to the Castle of the Grail leads from the left. A solemn reveille is heard in the distance. It is formed by the first two bars of the Motive of the Sacrament. *Gurnemanz* awakens and calls to the esquires :

Hey! Ho! Wood keepers twain!
Sleep keepers I deem ye!
At least be moving with morning!

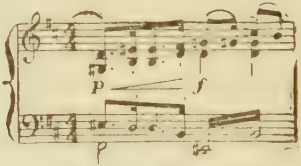
As they kneel in silent prayer the Motive of Faith echoes their devotional thoughts. The use of these motives at the very beginning of the act at once

touches the religious sympathies of the hearer, and causes him to feel that he is gazing upon a scene in some region whose ground is holy.

Two Knights of the Grail soon appear to prepare the King's bath in the forest lake, where he seeks to cool his burning wound. Afterward *Kundry* rushes in hastily, almost reeling, her garb fastened up high and girdled by a snake skin. Her black hair hangs in loose, flowing locks as she presses a flask of balsam for the King into the hand of *Gurnemanz*.

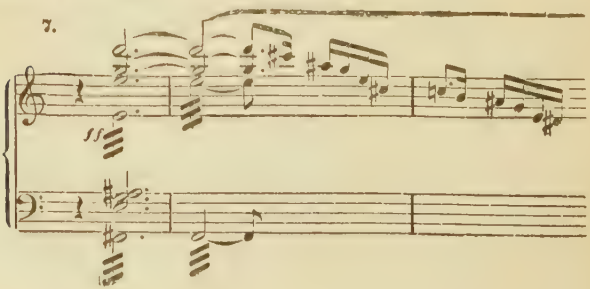
Kundry's rapid approach on her wild horse is accompanied by a furious gallop in the orchestra :

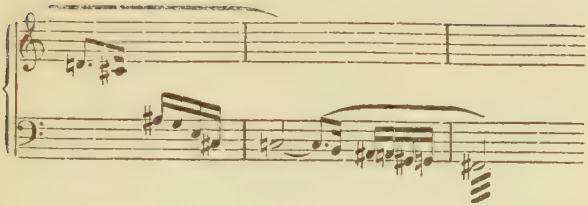
6.



Then, as she rushes upon the stage, the KUNDRY MOTIVE—a headlong descent of the string instruments through four octaves—is heard :

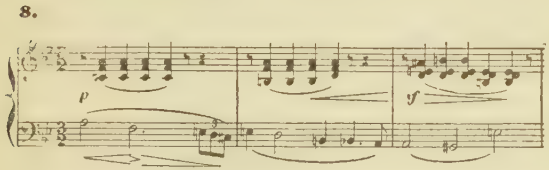
7.





Kundry's action in seeking balsam for the King's wound gives us insight into the two contradictory natures represented by her character. For here is the woman who brought all his suffering upon *Amfortas* striving to ease it when she is free from the evil sway of *Klingsor*. She is at times the faithful messenger of the Grail; at times the evil genius of its defenders.

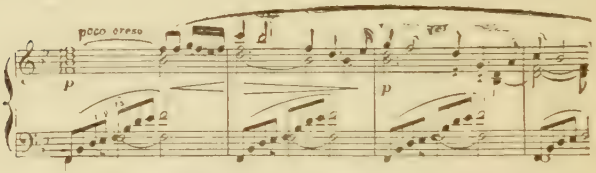
When *Amfortas* is borne in upon a litter there is heard the MOTIVE OF AMFORTAS' SUFFERING,



expressive of his physical and mental agony. It has a peculiar heavy, dragging rhythm, as if he were slowly dying of his wound. A most beautiful idyl is played by the orchestra when the knights bear *Amfortas* to the forest lake. One seems to hear the singing

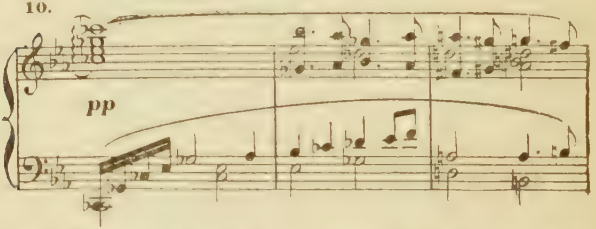
of birds, the rustling of leaves and the music of running waters:

9.



Gurnemanz then relates to the esquires who have remained behind with him the story of the Grail. When he tells how the sacred vessel and the spear were delivered to *Titurel*, to be guarded by him, the Motive of Faith assumes this exquisite form:

10.



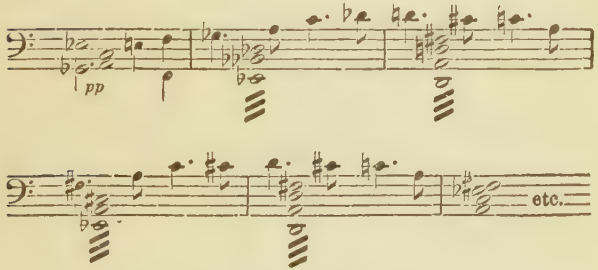
The story of *Amfortas'* fall from grace and *Klingsor's* capture of the holy spear is told in these words:

The waste he [Klingsor] hath transformed to wondrous gardens
Where women bide, of charms infernal;
Thither he seeks to draw the Grail's true wardens
To wicked joys and pain eternal.
Those who are lured find him their master;
To many happens such disaster.
When Titurel decayed in manhood's power
And with the regal might his son did dower
Amfortas gave himself no rest,
But sought to quell this magic pest.

While near the walls from us the king was ta'en :
A maid of fearful beauty turned his brain.
He lay bewitched, her form enfolding,
The spear no longer holding :
A deathly cry—I rushed anigh ;
But laughing Klingsor fled before—
The sacred spear away he bore.
I fought to aid the flying king's returning ;
A fatal wound, though, in his side was burning.
That wound it is which none may make to close.

The references to the magician and his evil work are accompanied by the MAGIC MOTIVE :

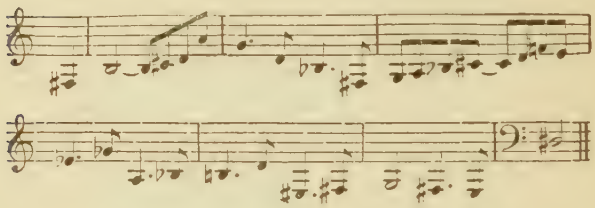
11.



During the narrative there are also heard the Sacrament and Grail Motive and the Spear Motive, formed by the third bar of the Sacrament Motive (No. 1). The scene gains dramatic force from the circumstance that one of his listeners is *Kundry* herself, who, lying upon the ground, rivets her wild eyes upon *Gurnemanz*, and follows his story with savage interest. Her motive breaks in upon the narrative, and

toward the close, when *Klingsor's* triumph is described, the KLINGSOR MOTIVE rings out triumphantly :

12.

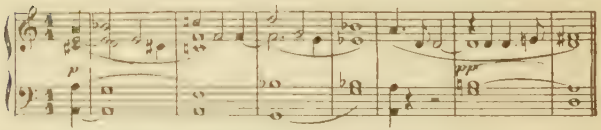


Gurnemanz concludes by telling the esquire that while *Amfortas* was praying for a sign as to who could heal him phantom lips pronounced these words :

By pity lightened
The guileless fool ;
Wait for him,
My chosen tool.

This introduces an important motive, that of the PROPHECY, a phrase of simple beauty, as befits the

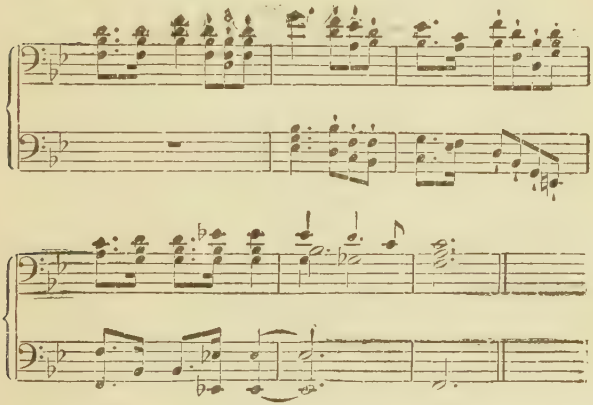
13.



significance of the words to which it is sung. *Gurnemanz* sings the entire motive and then the esquires take it up. They have sung only the first two lines when suddenly their prayerful voices are interrupted by shouts of dismay from the direction of the lake. A

moment later a wounded swan, one of the sacred birds of the Grail brotherhood, flutters over the stage and falls dead near *Gurnemanz*. The knights follow in consternation. Two of them have seized *Parsifal*, whom they accuse of murdering the sacred bird. As he appears the magnificent PARSIFAL MOTIVE rings out on the horns:

14.



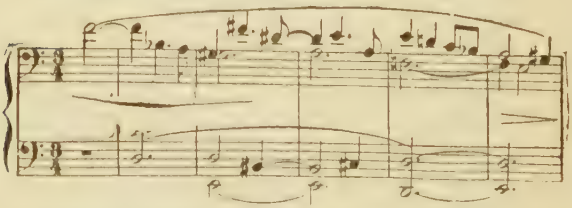
It is a buoyant and joyous motive, full of the wild spirit and freedom of this child of nature, who knows nothing of the Grail and its brotherhood or of the sacredness of the swan, and freely boasts of his skillful marksmanship.* Then follows *Gurnemanz's* noble reproof, sung to a broad and expressive melody. Even the animals are sacred in the region of the Grail

* During this episode the Swan Motive from "Lohengrin" is effectively introduced.

and are protected from harm. *Parsifal's* gradual awakening to a sense of wrong is one of the most touching scenes of the music drama. His childlike grief when he becomes conscious of the pain he has caused is so simple and pathetic that one cannot but be deeply affected.

After *Gurnemanz* has ascertained that *Parsifal* knows nothing of the wrong he committed in killing the swan he plies him with questions concerning his parentage. *Parsifal* is now gentle and tranquil. He tells of growing up in the woods, of running away from his mother to follow a cavalcade of knights who passed along the edge of the forest and of never having seen her since. In vain he endeavors to recall the many pet names she gave him. These memories of his early days introduce the sad motive of his suffering mother, HERZELEID:

15.



We also hear the Parsifal Motive and another phrase so akin to No. 6 that it need not be especially named. *Kundry* calls out to *Parsifal* that his mother is dead, and the youth, his fiery nature flaring up at her words, which he believes to be false, rushes threateningly

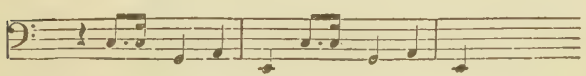
toward her. But the sudden excitement reacts upon him, and as he totters and falls *Kundry* hastens to his side to refresh him with a draught of water.

The answers which *Parsifal* has given *Gurnemanz* are so naive that the latter begins to hope *Parsifal* is the guileless fool for whose advent all have been anxiously looking so long. As the Knights of the Grail are to celebrate the love feast or communion that day, *Gurnemanz* bids the youth accompany him to the castle.

Then occurs a change of scene which in itself is highly effective dramatically. The scenery becomes a panorama drawn off toward the right, and as *Parsifal* and *Gurnemanz* face toward the left they appear to be walking in that direction. The forest disappears ; a cave opens in rocky cliffs and conceals the two ; they are then seen again in sloping passages which they appear to ascend. Long sustained trombone notes softly swell ; approaching peals of bells are heard. At last they arrive at a mighty hall which loses itself overhead in a high vaulted dome, down from which alone the light streams in.

The change of scene is ushered in by the solemn BELL MOTIVE,

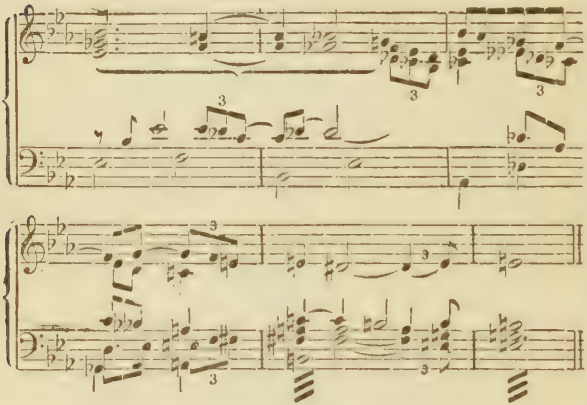
16.



which is the basis of the powerful orchestral interlude accompanying the panorama, and also of the scene in

the hall of the Grail Castle. As the communion, which is soon to be celebrated, is broken in upon by the violent grief and contrition of *Amfortas*, so the majestic sweep of this symphony is interrupted by the agonized MOTIVE OF CONTRITION,

17.

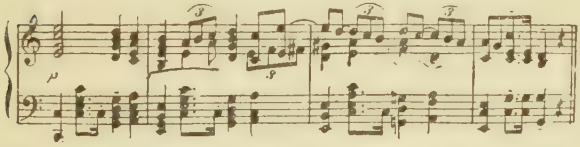


which graphically portrays the spiritual suffering of the King.

With the Motive of the Sacrament resounding solemnly upon the trombones, followed by the Bell Motive, pealing out in its simplest and most impressive form, and by the Grail Motive, sonorous and powerful, *Gurnemanz* and *Parsifal* enter the hall, the old knight giving the youth a position from which he can observe the proceedings. From the deep colonnades on either side in the rear the knights issue, march with stately tread and arrange themselves at the

horseshoe shaped table, which incloses a raised couch. Then, while the orchestra plays a solemn processional based on the Bell Motive, they intone the chorus, "To the last love feast." After the first verse a line of pages crosses the stage on the way to ascend into the dome and the orchestra plays a graceful interlude, also based on the Bell Motive, which I quote as a striking example of how Wagner, with a few artistic touches, can give an entirely new character to a motive, in this instance converting a most solemn phrase into pretty and pleasing measures :

18.



This is repeated in slightly altered form when a second line of pages appears. The chorus of knights closes with a glorious outburst of the Grail Motive as *Amfortas* is borne in, preceded by pages who bear the covered Grail. The king is lifted upon the couch and the holy vessel is placed upon the stone table in front of it. When the Grail Motive has died away amid the pealing of the bells the youths in the gallery below the dome sing a chorus of penitence based upon the Motive of Contrition. Then the Motive of Faith (No. 4) floats down from the dome in ethereal beauty as if sung by angel voices. It is an unaccompanied chorus for boys' voices, the orchestra whispering a brief postludium like a faint

echo of heavenly tones. This is, when sung as it was at Bayreuth, the most exquisite musical effect of the whole work, and for purity and spirituality is unsurpassed. It is an absolutely perfect example of religious music. It is a beautiful melody without the slightest worldly taint. It could never be listened to in any other than a devotional spirit, for its first notes would create such a spirit.

Titurel now summons *Amfortas* to perform his sacred office—to uncover the Grail. Tortured by contrition, the King refuses. Prominent here are the Kundry Motive and the Motive of Contrition; the Grail and Sacrament Motives are also heard with the Motive of Amfortas' Suffering. When the King's lament reaches its climax in a paroxysm of grief we have a repetition of the vehement modulations of the Sacrament Motive in the *Vorspiel*. Then are heard, softly descending from the dome, comforting voices chanting the prophecy of *Amfortas'* redemption through the Guileless Fool. The Grail is uncovered and the voices in the dome chant the chorus "Take of my body, take of my blood," to the Sacrament Motive; arpeggios, as in the *Vorspiel*, form a nebulous background to the theme. *Amfortas* is bowed in prayer. Dusk seems to spread itself through the hall. Suddenly a ray of brilliant light darts down upon the Grail which glows until a soft purple radiance diffuses itself over the scene.

Amfortas raises the Grail and blesses the wine and bread, all kneeling. When the King has again set down the Grail and its light has paled, four pages distribute

the wine and bread, and, as the knights partake of the communion, the boys' voices in the dome chant a chorus based on the Sacrament Motive. When it has been repeated by the youths one-half of the chorus of knights intones a chant, the Bell Motive solemnly accompanying it in the orchestra, the other half chorus repeats the chant, and then the entire chorus takes up the Grail Motive, the youths and boys repeating it. To the Faith Motive the congregation prepares to go. *Amfortas* bows his head and touches his wound, thus signifying that it is bleeding afresh, his action being accompanied by the Motive of Contrition in union with the Bell Motive. *Parsifal* presses his hand to his heart, the only indication of feeling he has exhibited during the scene. We hear the Motive of the Prophecy played softly, as if to give pathetic expression to the disappointment that *Parsifal* is not the Guileless Fool whom all are so anxiously expecting. The Grail and Bell Motives lead once more to the Prophecy. *Gurnemanz* and *Parsifal* are left alone. The old knight puts this question :

Why standest thou there?
Wist thou what thou saw'st?

(*Parsifal shakes his head slightly.*)

GURNEMANZ.

Thou art then nothing but a fool!

(*He opens a small side door.*)

Come away, on thy road begone
And put my rede to use;
Leave thou our swans for the future alone
And seek thyself, gander, a goose.

(*He pushes Parsifal out and slams the door angrily on him.*)

This jarring break upon the religious feeling awakened by the scene would be a rude ending for the act, but Wagner, with exquisite tact, allows the voices in the dome to be heard once more, and so the curtains close, amid the spiritual harmonies of the Prophecy of the Guileless Fool and of the Grail Motive.

Act II.

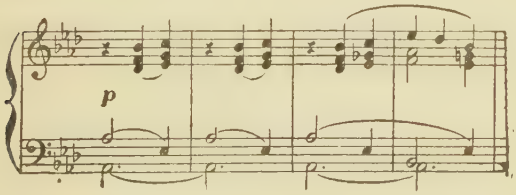
This act plays in *Klingsor's* magic castle and garden. The *Vorspiel* opens with the threatful Klingsor Motive, which is followed by the Magic and Contrition Motives, the wild Kundry Motive leading over to the first scene. This is enacted in the entresol of *Klingsor's* castle. The dark, threatening motives of *Klingsor's* evil powers, which compel obedience from *Kundry*, dominate the magician's summons, which causes her to rise amid bluish vapor from a pit in the entresol. Vainly she pleads for deliverance. *Klingsor* so fully controls her that he forces her to lie in wait in the magic garden for *Parsifal*, whom the magician now sees approaching. *Klingsor* watches him from the tower of the entresol. *Parsifal* easily gains the garden wall, overpowering the magician's knights, who seek to check his approach. *Klingsor* describes the youth's progress to *Kundry*, who at last disappears to her ambush in the garden with a weird, wild laugh. The orchestra, with the Parsifal Motive, gives a spirited description of the brief combat between *Parsifal* and the knights. Amid the dark har-

monies of the Klingsor Motive the entresol sinks out of sight and the magic garden, spreading out in all directions, with *Parsifal* standing on the wall and gazing with astonishment upon the brilliant scene, is disclosed.

The Parsifal Motive is heard and then the flower girls in great trepidation for the fate of their lover knights rush in from all sides with cries of sorrow, their confused exclamations and the orchestral accompaniment admirably enforcing their tumultuous actions.

The Parsifal Motive again introduces the next episode, as *Parsifal*, attracted by the grace and beauty of the girls, leaps down into the garden and seeks to mingle with them. It is repeated several times in the course of the scene. The girls, seeing that he does not seek to harm them, bedeck themselves with flowers and crowd about him with amorous gestures, finally circling around him as they sing this voluptuous, caressing melody :

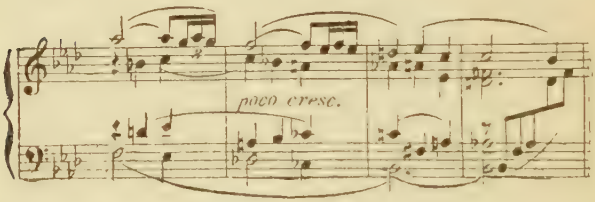
19.



the parts being exquisitely distributed among soli and various chorus groups. The effect is enchanting, the

music of this episode being a marvel of sensuous grace. But their luscious exhibition of lustful temptations is vain. *Parsifal* regards them with childlike, innocent joy. Following is another portion of their song:

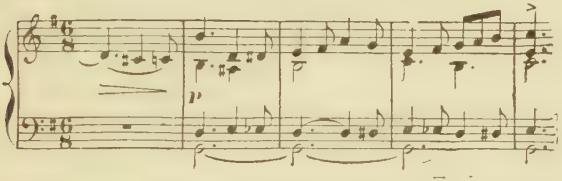
20.



Then they seek to impress him more deeply with their charms, at the same time quarreling among themselves over him. When their amorous rivalry has reached its height, *Kundry's* voice—"Parsifal, tarry!"—is wafted from a flowery nook nearby. His name seems to awaken memories of his youth, and as they are whispered up to him by the orchestra in the Herzeleid Motive he loses himself in reveries. *Kundry* becomes visible—a beautiful woman in soft, clinging draperies, reclining upon a bed of flowers. At her behest the flower girls disperse. She begins her seductive work by awakening in *Parsifal* still stronger reminiscences of his youth, telling him of *Herzeleid's* joy in him and of her grief when she missed him. The music of this episode is based chiefly upon the Herzeleid Motive, which assumes here a certain ca-

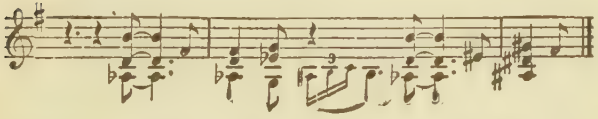
ressing grace, not, however, without its touch of pathos :

21.



When *Kundry* speaks of his mother sorrowing for him another expressive phrase—a second Herzeleid Motive—is introduced :

22.

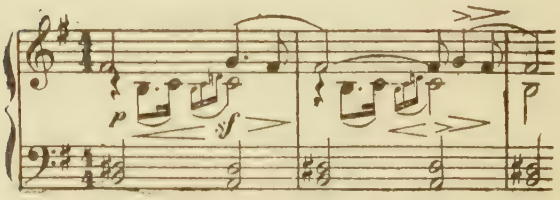


Parsifal's cries of self reproach find expression in the Herzeleid Motives, ending, however, with the Elegiac Motive. *Kundry*, having now wrought him up to a highly emotional, sensitive state, bends over him and, drawing him slowly toward her, presses a burning kiss upon his lips. But the harmonies of magic which accompanied her action yield suddenly to the Elegiac Motive and the Motive of Contrition, followed by the Kundry Motive as *Parsifal* exclaims : "Amfortas !" The very kiss with which *Kundry* intended to plant the seeds of unholy lust in *Parsifal's* breast has imparted to the "Guileless Fool" a

knowledge of evil. He suddenly sees before him the suffering, penitent *Amfortas*, and there on the bed of flowers lies the sorceress who seduced him from his sacred office. Hence the dramatic significance of the Kundry Motive following *Parsifal's* exclamation. The Grail, Sacrament and Elegiac Motives give poignancy to his grief, as the meaning of the scene he witnessed in the Grail Castle becomes clear to him in the light of his own temptation.

With a caressing variation of her motive (p. 180, l. 1, b. 1, &c.), *Kundry* seeks again to inveigle *Parsifal* in the meshes of her charms; but, with the Motive of Contrition forcefully accompanying his action, he pushes her away. *Kundry's* passion seems to gather force from his determination. She is driven by conflicting emotions. Longing for redemption the sorcerous power of *Klingsor* yet inflames her lust. She pleads with *Parsifal*, relates to him the tragic story of her curse and entreats him to yield her one hour of unholy joy. At her mention of the cross bearing Saviour, in whose face she laughed, the GOOD FRIDAY MOTIVE is heard:

23.



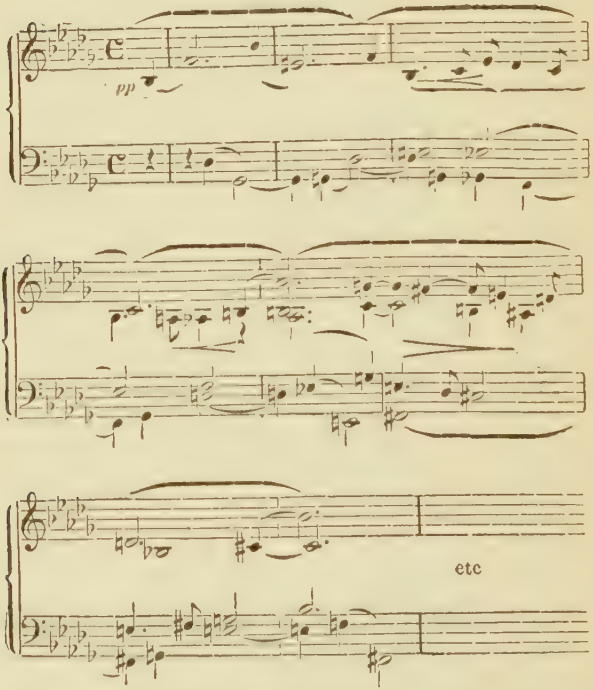
We also hear a portion of the Motive of Contrition (p. 184, l. 3, b. 2, &c.) and a variation of it (p. 185, l. 2, b. 2, &c.), and the Motive of Amfortas' Suffering (p. 186, l. 3, b. 4, &c.). But *Parsifal* remains unmoved. His mission is clear to him. He couches his reply at first in the chaste tones of the Prophecy of the Guileless Fool, and then in the ethereal harmonies of the Motive of Faith. In vain *Kundry* pleads in the seductive tones of the flower girl's measures. *Parsifal* is firm. He promises her redemption if she will lead him to *Amfortas*. But the power for evil is rampant within her. She seeks to embrace him. He thrusts her from him. Wild with passion she calls upon *Klingsor* to aid her. The magician appears upon the wall of the castle and hurls the holy spear at *Parsifal*. It remains suspended above him. Grasping it he makes with it the sign of the cross. With a great crash garden and castle vanish as if swallowed by the earth, leaving nothing but a dreary waste. *Kundry* has, with a wild shriek, collapsed. From the crumbling ruins of the castle wall *Parsifal*, before going his way, calls to her: "Thou knowest where you again can find me!"

Act III.

The *Vorspiel* shows *Parsifal* wandering through the wilderness in quest of the Castle of the Grail. That vision of *Amfortas*' suffering which came to him at the supreme moment of temptation filled him with pity and thus, "by pity lightened," he is seeking out

the king that he may heal the wound by touching it with the holy spear and put an end to *Amfortas'* spiritual and physical torture. The *Vorspiel* opens with the MOTIVE OF THE WILDERNESS :

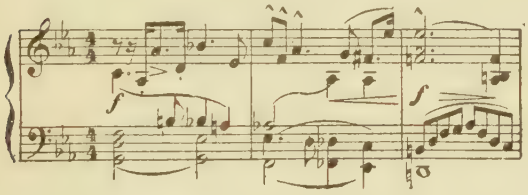
24.



followed by the WANDER MOTIVE, which strongly resembles No. 6. This leads through the Grail, Elegiac

and Kundry Motives, to a new version of the Prophecy of the Guileless Fool :

25.

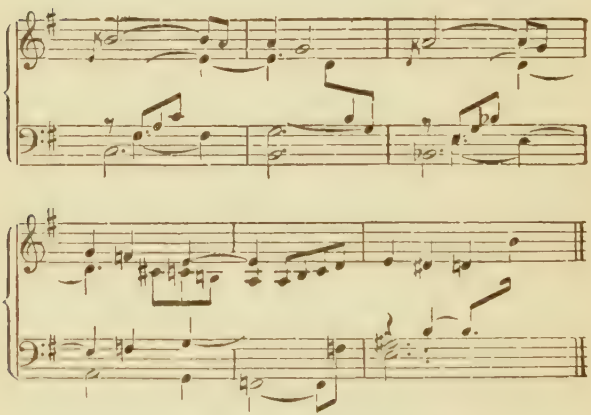


With the Magic Power and Klingsor Motives the *Vorspiel* passes into the act proper, the scene being laid in the vicinity of the Grail Castle. It is Good Friday and the grace of the day seems to rest upon the landscape. Toward the background is a slightly rising flowery meadow. To the right is a rocky ascent. To the left, on the edge of the wood, is a spring and opposite it a plain hut. It is early morning. *Gurnemanz*, greatly aged, comes forth from the hut. Having heard groans in the direction of a hedge near the spring he parts the bushes and there discovers *Kundry* lying as if dead. He bears her forth and revives her. While she does not thank him, her whole demeanor is softened and she stammers out, "Dienen! Dienen!" (Let me serve! Let me serve!) The two exclamations are all that is sung by *Kundry* during this act; but she has considerable by-play and, as the gentleness of her demeanor must contrast greatly with her wildness during the first act and her

seductive importuning in the second, an actress finds great scope for her powers in this character, which, though not an agreeable one until the last act, is nevertheless an impressive dramatic creation.

During this episode there are heard parts of a new motive, that of SALVATION, which in its full form is as follows:

26.



Following as they do (p. 204, l. 3, b. 2, &c., and p. 205, l. 2, b. 2, &c.) upon the sombre measures of the Magic, Klingsor and Wander Motives, without, however, reaching their entire development, they seem prophetic of the salvation which is to be *Kundry's* reward of penitence. Especially when *Gurnemanz* seeks to awaken her with the glad tidings of spring, it has

a vernal brightness and buoyancy. As if to emphasize the comforting assurance of this motive *Kundry's* awakening is accompanied by the Grail Motive; and although, as she opens her eyes and utters a terrified shriek, her wild motive courses through the orchestra, the music is soon softened and attuned to her penitent demeanor as she leaves *Gurnemanz* and enters the hut.

Gurnemanz marvels at her change of spirit, and wonders if it can be the sacred character of the day which has calmed her nature. The Sacrament, Grail, Good Friday (p. 209, l. 1, b. 3, &c.) and Elegiac Motives echo his soliloquy. *Kundry* issues from the hut bearing an earthen caraffe, and goes toward the spring, the orchestra breathing forth soft measures faintly premonitory of the "Good Friday Spell" (No. 29). Noticing someone approaching, she points him out to *Gurnemanz.*

Foreshadowed by his motive in sombre harmonies, *Parsifal*, clad in black armor, his visor down, comes upon the scene and seats himself upon a little knoll near the spring. *Gurnemanz* chides him for coming armed upon holy ground and on Good Friday, and explains to him the sacred significance of the day.

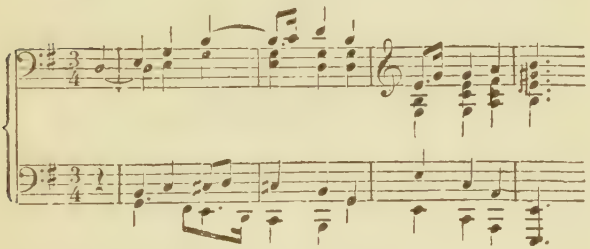
Parsifal arises, thrusts the spear into the earth, lays shield and sword beside it, opens his visor, removes his helmet and places it also beside the spear, before which he kneels in prayer. *Gurnemanz* recognizes him, and *Kundry*, whom he beckons to his side as she issues from the hut, confirms the recognition

by an affirmative inclination of the head. The Spear and Parsifal Motives—the latter still in sombre harmonies—accompany *Parsifal's* silent prayer and *Gurnemanz's* recognition. Then, as *Parsifal* raises his eyes reverentially toward the point of the spear, we hear the Elegiac Motive, which passes over to the Motive of the Prophecy, reaching, however, immediately afterward a superb climax when *Gurnemanz* recognizes the spear, the climax being enforced by the deeply emotional accents of the Motive of Contrition as *Kundry*, overcome by her feelings, turns away her face.

With the spiritually uplifting strains of the Grail Motive *Parsifal* holds out his hand to *Gurnemanz* in greeting. He tells of wandering in search of the realm of the Grail, the Motive of Amfortas' Suffering (p. 216, l. 3, b. 1, &c.) leading to the eloquent measures of the Grail Motive as he proclaims that he bears with him the holy spear. *Gurnemanz's* apostrophe of the divine grace which has wrought this wonder opens with the Motive of the Sacrament, leading to the Good Friday Motive and to an exquisite variation of the Faith Motive, familiar from the first act (No. 10), with a continuation which adds to its ethereal beauty. His narration of the sufferings which the Grail knights have endured and of *Titurel's* death moves *Parsifal* to an outburst of grief. As he seems about to succumb to his emotional excitement *Gurnemanz* supports him and lets him gently down upon the grassy knoll, while *Kundry* hurries for a caraffe of water. *Gurnemanz*, however, gently wards her off. Water from the holy

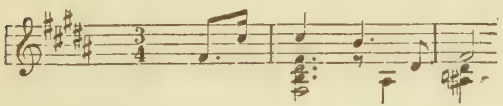
spring itself shall refresh him. The stately MOTIVE OF BAPTISM

27.



and the second MOTIVE OF SALVATION

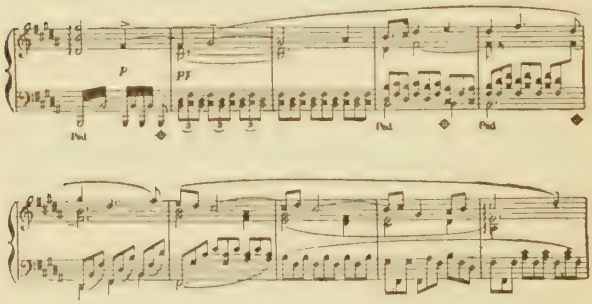
28



accompany *Gurnemanz's* words. The old knight and *Kundry* then turn *Parsifal* toward the spring and divest him of his armor, the knight assuring him that he will be conducted that day to *Amfortas*. Amid the tender strains of the Salvation Motives *Kundry* laves his feet; then as *Gurnemanz* baptizes him the Motive of Baptism and the second Forgiveness Motive reverentially accompany the rite. *Kundry* draws forth a golden vial, and amid the gently pathetic strains of the Good Friday Motive anoints his feet.

Parsifal, taking the vial from her, hands it to *Gurnemanz*, that the latter may anoint him king. As the old knight does so a majestic climax is produced by the Parsifal, Prophecy and Grail Motives. *Parsifal* fulfills his first sacred office by baptizing *Kundry*, the Baptism and Faith Motives leading over to the Elegiac Motive, which introduces the exquisite Good Friday Spell. A feeling of perfect repose has entered *Parsifal's* soul; a blessed calm seems to have descended upon nature. *Gurnemanz* beautifully attributes to the holy day the tranquillity which reigns over forest and meadow; and with tender grace the music of the scene seems to breathe forth the "peace of God which passeth all understanding." The scene opens with the GOOD FRIDAY SPELL:

29.



Then are heard (p. 232, l. 4, b. 1, &c.) the gentle notes of the first Salvation Motive. This is followed by the

Sacrament Motive when *Parsifal* deems that Good Friday should be a day of sorrow rather than of tranquillity, but the Good Friday Spell and the Grail Motive peacefully unfold themselves when *Gurnemanz* attributes the vernal beauty of the day to the rejoicing of nature over its redemption. *Kundry* is deeply affected; she gazes with moist eyes up to *Parsifal*, who, amid exquisite musical phrases, gently presses a holy kiss upon her brow.

The distant tolling of bells is heard, and mingling with it the funereal measures of the music of *Titurel's* obsequies, and then to the majestic measures of the Parsifal Motive *Parsifal*, *Gurnemanz* and *Kundry* set out for the Castle of the Grail, the old knight having clad the young king in the mantle of the Grail knighthood. It was originally intended that another panoramic change, like that in the first act, should occur here, but Wagner wisely refrained from repeating this mechanical effect, and the scene is changed to the Grail hall behind a drop.

The hall wears a gloomy aspect. The communion tables have been removed. From one side enter a train of knights bearing *Titurel's* bier; from the other, those bearing *Amfortas* upon a litter. They beseech *Amfortas* to uncover the Grail as part of the obsequies, but *Amfortas*, lamenting his guilt, refuses. When *Titurel's* features are exposed, all cry out with grief, *Amfortas* raising himself upon his litter and turning toward his father's corpse with a burst of agonized self reproaches. The knights crowd about him and threateningly command him to uncover the Grail.

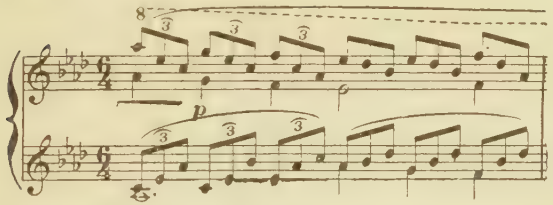
Then, in frenzied woe, *Amfortas*, the motive of his suffering forcefully accompanying his action (p. 251, l. 2, b. 5, &c.), tears open his garments and bids his knights slay him. At this dramatic moment *Parsifal*, who has entered unnoticed with *Gurnemanz* and *Kundry*, steps forth from among the knights, the tragic measures which portrayed *Amfortas'* frenzy yielding to the comforting strains of the Grail Motive, and this in turn giving way to the Elegiac Motive, as *Parsifal* touches *Amfortas'* wound with his holy spear. *Amfortas'* features are illumined with transport as he feels his physical and spiritual pain yielding to the touch of the holy spear. The motive of his agony grows fainter and finally passes into the Motive of the Prophecy. Amid the resounding chords of the Parsifal Motive *Parsifal* strides to the centre of the hall and raises aloft the holy spear upon which all gaze ecstatically, the Sacrament Motive leading to the Motives of Faith and Contrition, this last being followed by part of the Motive of the Prophecy, which has now been fulfilled.

Parsifal ascends the steps of the sanctuary and takes from it the Grail; as he kneels its glow begins to diffuse itself. A beautiful light shimmers in the dome and gradually spreads through the hall. A white dove descends and hovers above *Parsifal*. *Kundry*, gazing ecstatically upon her Saviour, sinks slowly down in death; *Amfortas* and *Gurnemanz* kneel in homage before him as he sways the Grail over the praying knights.

The music of this entire scene floats upon ethereal arpeggios. The Motive of Faith especially is exquis-

itely accompanied, its spiritual harmonies finally appearing in this form :

30.



There are also heard the Motives of Prophecy and of the Sacrament, as the knights on the stage and the youths and boys in the dome chant. The Grail Motive, which is prominent throughout the scene, rises as if in a spirit of gentle religious triumph and brings, with the Sacrament Motive, the work to a close.